



Kensington & Chelsea NEWS

LWN

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● VENUE THAT LAUNCHED HENDRIX AND DYLAN AT RISK

Noisy diners may force closure of iconic music club



■ **ROCK FAVOURITES:** Jimmy Page at the Troubadour with owner Susie Thornhill.

● By LWN reporter **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

WEST London's most iconic music venue, a favourite club of everyone from the Rolling Stones and Ed Sheeran to Adele and Prince Harry, is facing closure because the local council is supporting noise complaints from just FOUR people.

But the complaints are not even about the music – but are about patrons chattering too loudly.

The world-famous Troubadour – a Mecca for thousands of music fans as the London birthplace of Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon and Joni Mitchell – is up for sale as the owners are struggling to make ends meet because of lost revenue due to a noise abatement order from Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council.

If new owners are found, there is no guarantee that the tiny, 120-capacity cellar club on Old Brompton Road will continue as a venue for live music.

But if the council lifted the anti-noise order the basement club – which is widely considered to be as historically important to West London as The Cavern is to Liverpool as the launch-pad of The Beatles – could continue.

The owners, Simon and Susie Thornhill, have put the club up for sale because of cash-flow problems caused by the council order forcing the garden dining area to close by 9pm. The council's order came after complaints from nearby residents about diners talking loudly in the garden.

"Obviously people don't want to go out for dinner and have to finish their meal by nine



■ **PROTEST SONGS:** Ronnie Wood, top, and Bob Dylan, inset, at the Troubadour.

o'clock," said Mrs Thornhill. "Because the council order means we have to close the garden at nine, we have lost money, which represents a big chunk of our cash flow."

Mrs Thornhill said the com-

plaints over chatter in the garden had come from only four residents.

"What I can't fathom is why the council is supporting the complaints of just four residents up against the widespread popularity of The Troubadour. This is one of only three major live venues left in Kensington and Chelsea," she said.

But now the council is facing a wave of complaints from rock stars, music fans and the Music Venue Trust, calling on councillors to cancel the noise abatement order and save the club, which is steeped in music history.

The Troubadour now boasts a restaurant, bar, wine shop, delicatessen beside the hugely-popular music venue, but it is also one of the last remaining 1950s coffee houses in London.

Since it opened in 1954, it

■ **TURN TO PAGE 3**

**INSIDE THE
CITY'S
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Rescue pilot role puts pressure on 'four jobs' prince

– see page 11



Calamity Jane gets better by degrees

Talk of the Town, Page 19

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COMMISSION WILL FREE UP URGENTLY NEEDED DEVELOPMENT SITES

London homes in on new housing land

MAYOR of London Boris Johnson and Housing Minister Brandon Lewis have officially launched the London Land Commission, marking the first ever co-ordinated effort between City Hall, government and boroughs to free up surplus public land in London to build the homes that the city so desperately needs.

At the commission's first meeting, held at City Hall, it was announced that real estate research firm Savills has been appointed to compile the preliminary stages of a so-called 'Domesday Book' of all brownfield public land in London, to be completed by the end of 2015. Once collected, City Hall will use the data to map the spread of sites across the city. It is thought to be the first time such a comprehensive set of data has ever been collected for London.

The commission's launch on July 13 followed a series of announcements from Chancellor George Osborne on major planning reforms designed to speed up development of brownfield land in London and increase capacity to build more homes in the areas they are most needed.

The commission will build on work already started by the Mayor in disposing of his own land holdings for development. At present 98 per cent of all land previously in his ownership has been re-



FROM THE
MAYOR'S
OFFICE

leased, within touching distance of the 100 per cent target for the end of his term in 2016.

The commission, announced by the Mayor and Chancellor George Osborne in February as part of the long-term economic plan for London, will work across layers of government and public bodies to develop strategies for unlocking public land for development.

The commission will identify priority areas for future growth and co-ordinate efforts to fast-track the process, whilst ensuring a good return for the taxpayer and better regeneration sites across London. The inaugural meeting was attended by London Councils, NHS England, Transport for London and Network Rail, with

participation at the highest levels from other bodies such as the Department of Health.

Boris Johnson said: "The London Land Commission will build on the great efforts we've already made at City Hall to ensure brownfield land that has laid empty for years is put to productive use in providing much-needed housing for Londoners. In a city like ours, with its burgeoning population, it is simply madness not to act as quickly as we can to unlock more of these kinds of sites. The commission's work will be vital in co-ordinating the efforts of a whole raft of public bodies to achieve this important goal, helping to cut through the red tape that has kept valuable land tied up for too long."

Brandon Lewis said: "As a global city, with excellent opportunities and links to the rest of the world, there is clear demand to release land and provide more homes for Londoners. The London Land Commission will bring a joined-up approach to land release in the capital – regenerating brownfield land and providing more homes, whilst continuing to protect the green belt around our capital."

London Councils' executive member for housing and Mayor of Lewisham Sir Steve Bullock said: "It is vital that our overall strategy to

tackle the housing crisis delivers an increase in affordable homes for ordinary Londoners. The efficient use of vacant land, whether owned by the Mayor, Transport for London, boroughs, the NHS or private sector developers, is a key part of the solution."

Land already released by the Mayor includes east London's Royal Docks, the Beam Park site in Rainham, and the former Cane Hill hospital site in Croydon. Unlocking unused public land for development is vitally important in achieving the Mayor's aim of building half a million homes for Londoners over the next decade, including 100,000 affordable homes over his two terms.

The Mayor has designated 15 housing zones with a combined total funding of £466.23 million across London to help achieve this aim, working with boroughs to fast-track development approvals and transport improvements in areas where this may not otherwise have occurred. 20 housing zones are expected to be designated by the end of 2015, with 50,000 new homes to be created as a result. In May 2015 the first allocations of the Mayor's £200 million housing bank were announced, which will provide low-cost loans to enable homes to be brought forward on a speedy timeline.



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MP's mission to fight for all

KENSINGTON'S MP Victoria Borwick has promised a tag-team campaign with her husband in the House of Lords to "fight steadfastly" for the vulnerable and disabled and has vowed to become a champion for the poor and the rich of the borough alike.

In her 10-minute, 1,200-word maiden speech in the House of Commons last week, Lady Borwick told MPs of her determination to fight for the disadvantaged of the community.

"I come here to fight for the needs of the vulnerable and disabled in our country and I welcome the challenge," she said.

In her revealingly-personal first speech to the Commons, during a Budget debate last Tuesday, Lady Borwick told how her family had coped personally with the trials of disability. She told MPs that her two eldest children had been born with heart defects and she pledged that she and her husband Lord Jamie Borwick will campaign in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords for better deals for the disabled.

"I have been married to Jamie for over 30 years, and we have four wonderful children. Sadly, our eldest two were born with serious heart defects. Our eldest son spent a year in the Royal Brompton & Harefield hospital. Despite the excellent care, he was left with permanent disabilities," she said.

● By **GEOFF BAKER**
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"But Jamie and I are great believers in the American maxim, 'When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.' We quickly gained a working knowledge of paediatric cardiology and, of course, lifelong disability.

"I know that I am not alone in this Chamber when I talk about the hours spent by the bedside of a sick child or loved one, or about the toll that being a carer takes. I intend to work steadfastly here with others to represent the needs of the disabled, just as my husband takes up the cudgels for that campaign on the red benches."

She added: "The museums and the streets lined with terraced mansions tell only one side of the story in Kensington. Beyond the affluent stereotype there is a deeper story: the blight of poverty and social isolation afflicts Kensington, too, with some of London's poorest communities. The constituency is not just for the rich and famous; it is home to a melting pot of constituents who make London the greatest city on earth. I intend to be a champion for all my constituents, irrespective of their backgrounds."

Lady Borwick also spoke of "the vital importance" of supporting local businesses in the borough and said she would campaign to make sure that they are free of red tape.

"Only by supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses can we help promote jobs and employment," she said.

Extracts from Victoria Borwick's maiden speech...

Tribute to Sir Malcolm

I WOULD like to begin by paying tribute to my predecessor, Sir Malcolm Rifkind. One of only five Ministers to serve throughout both the Thatcher and Major premierships, Sir Malcolm has a long and distinguished record of service to our country.

A fierce opponent of injustice, Sir Malcolm is not one to be cowed or intimidated. In 1984, as a junior Foreign Minister on an historic visit to Poland, against the wishes of the then Polish communist Prime Minister, General Jaruzelski, Sir Malcolm insisted on meeting the leaders of the Solidarity movement and laying a wreath at the grave of a Polish priest who had been brutally murdered at the hands of his communist oppressors. Sir Malcolm is also a visionary and a forward thinker. Quick to identify Mikhail Gorbachev as someone with whom the west could 'do business', he was instrumental in convincing Margaret Thatcher of the importance of our engagement with the Soviet Union. Above all, Malcolm Rifkind was much admired in the constituency.

Dirty work

I HAVE had the good fortune to inspect multimillion-pound infrastructure projects. Upon the instruction of my now Honourable Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), I was lowered through a manhole cover to inspect sewers, as part of the re-engineering work for Crossrail. Separately, I have made further visits to



■ **CAPITAL PROPHET: Lady Borwick.**

inspect the sewers as part of the Thames tideway renewal work. Who says being deputy Mayor of London is without glamour?

Lifelong Londoner

HAVING come from a family background in engineering, I went into business for many years, becoming a school governor, a campaigner and then a local councillor. As a lifelong Londoner, I was honoured to be elected to the London Assembly in 2008, and in 2012 I was honoured that the Mayor, now my Honourable Friend the Member for

Uxbridge and South Ruislip, asked me to be his deputy. Kensington is my home; it is where I grew up, went to school, worked and raised my family. Although I have seen Kensington change over time, I am not quite old enough to have seen the deprivation of the mid-19th century piggeries and potteries, which were some of the most evil-smelling in London, but which have since been transformed into the stylish streets of Notting Hill.

I know many Honourable Members are familiar with Kensington. How many have beaten a path with their families to twirl the handles and press the knobs at the Science Museum, to explore the world of the dinosaurs and meet the much-maligned Dippy in the great hall—now the Hintze hall—of the Natural History Museum, and to marvel at the glories of the V&A, to name but a few of our cultural attractions? Twelve million visitors came to our museums last year. Nationally, more people visit museums and cultural attractions than go to football matches.

A good deal

FOR much of my career I was involved with the art and antiques industry. There are over 7,000 specialist art and antique dealers nationally, offering jobs and employment, particularly in Kensington Church Street and, of course, our famous Portobello Road. As president of the British Antique Dealers Association, I support our trade. We should be working with those small businesses to ensure that we in this House do not impose ill-considered restrictions upon them.

Troubadour may be forced to close over noise complaints (diners talking, not the music)

FROM PAGE 1

has long been a launch venue for the careers of many of the world's biggest music stars and is a landmark of London's musical heritage.

Bob Dylan performed one of his first gigs in London there in 1962, when he played under the name of Blind Boy Grunt. Paul Simon played there in 1965 and it was a favourite venue of Jimi Hendrix when he lived in London in the Sixties.

Charlie Watts was discovered drumming at the club in 1961 by the legendary Alexis Korner, who recruited him to his band Blues Incorporated and then introduced him to Brian Jones, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Bill Wyman to form The Rolling Stones. Two years ago fellow Stones Ron Wood and Mick Taylor chose the venue for a secret gig for friends.

Kensington resident and guitar god Jimmy Page played The Troubadour with Robert Plant in 1975 at after-show jams following Led Zeppelin's gigs at the Earls Court and Elton John chose the club for a show to promote the launch of his album *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*.

The club has also been a home to Joni Mitchell, folk legends Sandy Denny, Linda Thompson, Martin Carthy, Davey Graham

and Bert Jansch and many jazz stars including Lionel Grigson, Spike Wells and Daryl Runswick.

More recently, Morrissey played at The Troubadour in 2012 and it was a launch venue for the two biggest stars of the modern music scene, Ed Sheeran and Adele. The club is also a popular nightspot for Prince Harry. And before he was married Prince William also regularly visited the club to see his friends' bands play.

"The Troubadour is far too important a venue to have to close," said Mrs Thornhill.

"We also hold art exhibitions and poetry workshops here and a song academy for youngsters aged eight to 16. It's still a venue for the future stars of tomorrow.

"If the council was to respond positively and remove the noise abatement order it could change things and would give us a bit of a breather and help our cash flow. But if the sale does go through we're hoping that it would bring investment for the club to survive, as it deserves to live on."

But a new owner could close the club and turn it into another of the many estate agents' offices that have opened in the area in recent years.

"We have also suffered loss of

business from the knock-on effect of Earls Court shutting," said Mrs Thornhill. "It's extraordinary that the council said that wouldn't have any effect on local night time businesses. It has had a big effect and now we've got all of these estate agents moving in. We need a vibrant area here for restaurants and local businesses. If we have more estate agents it's all going to disappear."

The council revealed that all the complaints about noise from The Troubadour garden came from just one resident, protesting on 15 occasions on behalf of other neighbours.

A council spokesman said: "Those complaints did not relate in any way to music from the basement venue but to noise from the garden. Environmental health officers visited on a number of occasions and witnessed the nuisance for themselves. Loud voices could be heard in neighbouring properties through the evening and into the night."

"We met with the owners and their representatives who voluntarily offered to close the garden from 10pm. The council considered that 9pm would be a more reasonable time but offered to review this at a later date. The owners have not taken up that offer."

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Nursing home makes way for 'extra care'

● By GEOFF BAKER

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AN empty and outdated old people's home in Chelsea is to close permanently as part of plans to provide around 150 new homes for older residents, the council's cabinet decided last week.

The 56-bed Thamesbrook home has been closed since May 2014 following the discovery of Legionella in the water system. Despite the efforts of staff and specialist contractors, the outbreak proved intractable and led to what Kensington & Chelsea Borough Council called "an unacceptable reduction in care standards and consequent transfers to other homes".

Following the temporary closure, the council ordered a review that looked at four options for the future of the home: refurbishing it, remodelling it so that it meets modern standards, replacing it with 'extra care' housing units on the site or replacing it with extra care units elsewhere in the borough.

"Extra care is a form of housing in which older people rent or buy their own homes in developments where care is available on site in the quantity and type needed, and which can 'scale up' as people become older and



■ ALL CHANGE: Thamesbrook nursing home.

frailer," said a council spokesman. "Extra care homes also feature communal social areas where residents can keep company and enjoy activities."

"One of the key ambitions expressed in the council's 2013 strategy for the future of older people's accommodation, 'Modernising Older People's Housing', is for more extra care schemes. The evidence is that the extra care approach produces more years of good health and independence, and also that older people themselves prefer such arrangements."

Following last week's decision, the council will now bring forward plans for up to 100 new extra care units either on the Thamesbrook site or on a large council-owned site at Lots Road – or shared across both.

"Although the configuration is yet to be settled, some of those homes will be for the private

market, for which there is a strong local demand, and at least half will be at affordable rents," said the spokesman. At the same time the council is also working on other schemes in North Kensington that could add a further 70 new affordable homes for older residents. To address nursing provision the authority is investing £1.1 million to create a new 20-bed nursing unit at Ellesmere House on the Fulham Road. The new unit is expected to open in autumn 2015.

"Thamesbrook is one of the last old-style homes and has given great service for many years," said Cllr Mary Weale, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, "but old-style institutions are no longer how we wish to look after our older residents and it's not how older people want to be looked after either."

"Extra care is the future and this prime site means we now

have the chance to make a serious down payment on our ambitions for high quality extra care housing. That's a fitting legacy for Thamesbrook to leave behind."

As part of the Thamesbrook review a public consultation was carried out that received nearly 200 submissions. A total of 48 per cent of respondents supported the council's preference for the extra care options, compared with 44 per cent of respondents who were opposed, preferring to see the home refurbished, remodelled or rebuilt.

"Despite that opposition, people were generally supportive of extra care housing. In total, 77

per cent agreed that the council should seek to maximise the amount of extra care housing in the borough," said the spokesman. "However, some were concerned that the extra care option did not address the needs of older people with advanced dementia or other conditions requiring nursing care."

Built in the 1960s, Thamesbrook was one of the few homes in the UK still run by a local authority and the only one run by the council.

"As well as Legionella, the building has many other defects," said the spokesman. "It is tired and institutional. Rooms are some 16 per cent smaller than

modern standards. None can be classified as wheelchair compliant. Also, the furniture layout is relatively fixed, meaning residents had less choice about where things go and what personal items they could bring in and several rooms cannot meet current care standards because it is impossible to provide care from either side of the bed."

"In addition, the overall layout of narrow winding corridors and units spread across three floors made supervision much more difficult and contributed to running costs far higher than places in private nursing homes offering objectively higher standards of accommodation."



NEWS FROM NICK ...

with Nicholas Paget-Brown, Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

It's never been more fun to keep fit... come on in!

IN the days of my youth, I was something of a speed walker. You had to be in the 1970s, if you wanted to watch Sue Lawley on *Nationwide* and still arrive at the Red Lion in time for first orders.

But sadly my athletics days are long gone and the big physical challenge for me lately has been applying Voltrol to my lower back. For the harsh truth is that over the last couple of decades exercise is something that I have been putting off until tomorrow. That must change.

So slowly, tentatively, I have been dipping my toes, quite literally as a matter of fact, because one of the safest forms of exercise for someone of my fitness level is swimming.

Out of consideration for our residents I have swapped my ancient Speedos for a pair of knee-length shorts and, as readers of this column will know, I have been popping up to our brand new £30 million leisure centre which is magnificent, quite frankly.

It is a real pleasure to do a few lengths of powerful front crawl and butterfly in the pristine surroundings of the Kensington Leisure Centre.

Anyway, it turns out that I am not the only one who has decided that the hour has come and that they simply must do

some exercise. Since we have opened our new leisure centre in North Kensington and handsomely refurbished our Chelsea gym there has been a very pleasing upturn in gym usage.

The number of members across both gyms is now 4,800 – up from 2,950 for the old gyms. The number of pay-as-you-go users is up too.

In all, we had 64,000 gym visits in May alone; 29,000 for swimming, 20,000 for the gym and 15,000 for classes. And we've got more kids doing swimming lessons as well, with 1,700 pupils taking the plunge.

We have spent a lot of money on our gyms but the early signs are that we are seeing a return on that investment, in more people taking better care of themselves, in more people having fun and in more young people getting involved in sport and fitness.

If, like me, you belong to the Angel Delight

generation, it could just be that you too could do with a little exercise. If so you could do a lot worse than check out our excellent gyms.

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● HERITAGE SELL-OFF 'COULD PUT QUEEN IN PERIL'

Plans for hotels in landmark buildings spark terror fears

● By LWN reporter **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

PLANS to turn Government buildings in Whitehall into luxury hotels are putting The Queen at "a massive risk" to a terrorist sniper, members of the House of Lords have warned.

Peers fear a terrorist could book a room overlooking the route taken by The Queen on State parades and attempt to assassinate the monarch or other members of the Royal Family.

Their fears have been heightened because the Government has not insisted on security checks on staff at the new hotels.

Lord Reid, the former Home Secretary John Reid, told the House of Lords that the sale of two government buildings will compromise national security and put the Queen in danger.

Admiralty Arch and the Old War Office, in the heart of Whitehall, have been sold to private developers for almost £200 million. Developers plan to convert the buildings – which overlook the route of State proces-



■ **SECURITY ALERT:** The sale of former government landmarks such as the Admiralty Arch have prompted questions in the House of Lords.

sions between Buckingham Palace and the Palace of Westminster – into luxury hotels. The Government has defended the sale on the grounds of needing the cash to bring down the national deficit.

But ministers have come under heavy criticism from Lords opposing the sale on the grounds of The Queen's safety. In a debate earlier this month, peers called on Cabinet Office Secretary Lord Bridges to urge the Government to drop the plan for the new hotels.

Lord Reid said: "National security is a matter for the Government, not for new private owners. As to the reduction of the deficit, while obviously we want to do that, if the cost of reducing the deficit by a couple of hundred million pounds is to put our national security – not to mention the monarch – at risk, it is not a price worth paying."

Former Shadow Defence Minister Lord Foulkes called for the plan for new hotels to be re-examined by the security forces as The Queen could

be endangered on Remembrance Day and at the State Opening of Parliament.

He asked Lord Bridges: "Does the noble Lord recall that when President Bush made a state visit to London, the entire Whitehall area was cordoned off, including to Members of Parliament? Does he also recall that the IRA, from within the area of Whitehall, managed to mortar No. 10? Further, he will remember that the bombing of the Brighton hotel, which affected Mrs Thatcher and others, involved a bomb was placed in the hotel some time in advance of the incident? Do the security services intend to vet positively all the staff of these hotels; has that been agreed? Will the hotels be closed to all visitors during state visits or will the visitors be vetted as well?"

Speaking for the Government, Lord Bridges said he was satisfied with security arrangements but he admitted that there were no rules that hotel staff should be security vetted.

"I have looked into the clauses of the leases for both the Old War Office and Admiralty Arch and I am satisfied that they allow for appropriate access for both security and ceremonial purposes," he said.

Gallipoli VC hero's story is etched in stone for all time

A MEMORIAL commemorating Leonard Keyser, a Westminster First World War hero who was awarded the Victoria Cross, took place on July 7th at Victoria Embankment.

Lance Corporal (later Lieutenant) Leonard Keyser of the 1st Battalion, the Australian Imperial Force, was honoured with a commemorative paving stone as part of a scheme to remember recipients of the VC.

The service was attended by Westminster City Council's Armed Forces Champion Cllr Rachael Robathan and the Lord Mayor of Westminster Cllr Christobel Flight, who unveiled the paving stone alongside past, present and future representatives from the Royal British Legion, HQ London District, and Army Cadets.

Mr Keyser was awarded a Victoria Cross for his actions on the 7th August, 1915, at Gallipoli, for "most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty at Lone Pine trenches in Gallipoli Peninsula".

He picked up two live bombs and threw them back at the enemy at great risk to his own life, and continued throwing bombs, although himself wounded, thereby saving a portion of the trench which it was most important to hold.

Guests were joined at the ceremony



■ **LEST WE FORGET:** Leonard Keyser's memorial stone.

emony by a class from Westminster Cathedral Catholic Primary school as two pupils read epitaphs having learnt about Mr Keyser as part of the Community Covenant Grant Scheme.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Christobel Flight, said: "In Westminster we have built this memorial for residents and visitors to observe and remember our local heroes. By 2018, the paving stones here will be replaced with an engraved stone representing each of the local Victoria Cross recipients from the First World War."

The Victoria Cross is the highest and most prestigious honour bestowed on any serviceman who has shown exceptional courage in the face of the enemy. Mr Keyser is the third of ten Westminster residents who received the Victoria Cross during the 1914-18 conflict.

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Landlord is fined £25,000 for licence and safety failings

A LANDLORD who did not have the required licence for the number of tenants living in his property, and also failed to carry out gas safety checks, has been ordered to pay £25,151.92 after he pleaded guilty at Hammersmith Magistrates' Court to five charges under the Housing Act 2004. On October 8th, 2014 environmental health officers from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea visited 15 Bramley Road, London, W10, owned by Emmil Seeson Watson (also known as Emil Wayne Watson), of Nash Close, Earley, Reading.

The visit followed complaints from tenants about a leaking roof they could not get repaired as they were unable to contact Watson. Up to seven tenants were living in the house, despite Watson not having a licence for a house in multiple occupation as required by the Housing Act 2004. This licence is an important requirement as it enables the council to ensure a property is safe for the number of occupiers and is properly managed.

The court heard that Watson had gone out of his way to avoid co-operating with the council and had made himself very difficult to contact. He had refused to obtain the proper licence despite two previous warnings. Three emergencies had occurred at the house since 2012, including a leak that caused a ceiling to collapse and a window that needed repair after a burglary, and tenants were forced to complain to the emergency services and the council because Watson could not be reached.

Danger

Watson told the court that had he licensed the property he would have had to raise the rents, whereas some rents had stayed the same for some years. He also stated that he paid the bills out of the rents he took. He also said he was not replacing the tenants who had left, therefore reducing the number of people living at the property, which would mean it would not need to be licensed.

Commenting on the case, which was heard on Tuesday, July 14th, the chairwoman of the bench said Watson had put his tenants in danger and failed to follow clear warnings from the council regarding the licensing of the property.

A council spokesman said: "The council will take action against landlords who deliberately avoid their legal obligations and who make life difficult for their tenants. We are very pleased that the court fully supported the action taken by the council and trust that the prosecution will act as a deterrent to other landlords who do not take their responsibilities seriously."



■ EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE... Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, by Opera Holland Park.



■ LEAD ROLE... Soprano Rosanne Havel shares the lead role in Alice's Adventures In Wonderland.

Chorus of approval for opera

OPERA Holland Park is top of the classical pops – with its new album going straight in the charts at No 1.

The album of OHP's version of *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* has become the must-have recording for thousands of fans of the Kensington opera company.

Within a week of its release at the end of June, the album shot to the top of the UK classical charts and has stayed there since, outselling new releases of works by Sibelius, Tchaikovsky and Mendelssohn.

The family opera, written by Will Todd and Maggie Gottlieb, has been a big hit with music lovers of all ages since it was premiered by OHP in 2013.

Critics have raved over the production; *The Daily Telegraph's* John Allison called it "the most charming, least condescending opera for children I have ever seen" and *The Independent's* Michael Church said "the show is so much fun, and so well sung, that not even the youngest kids get bored".

The opera, which features OHP favourite Fflur Wyn sharing the Alice role with rising

star Rosanne Havel, continues at the Yucca Lawn, Holland Park, until August 1st.

Tickets are £5 for children and £10 for adults. Performed in a woodland setting, the production sees viewers promenade between the eye-catching sets accompanied by the singers and the 'Alice Band'. To mark the 150th anniversary of the publication of Lewis Carroll's classic, OHP's production will be staged for the first time in November at the Royal Opera House.

"Alice is rightly enjoying tremendous success right now, not least because of the wonderful Fflur Wyn who created the role of Alice and Rosanna Havel, who will assume it next," said the Leader of the Council, Cllr Nick Paget-Brown. "But this is not the first time Opera Holland Park has had ecstatic reviews."

"It's no wonder that thousands of our residents are such avid fans of OHP; if you are not yet one of them, you should check out the amazing ticket deals and give it a try. The details are all at www.operahollandpark.com".

Market has the write approach

LOCAL authors looking for a subject to hone their writing skills have until Friday, 31 July to submit a story that captures the history of Portobello and Golborne Market.

The competition, organised by the council's library service and the market office, is one of a series of events to celebrate the market's 150th year of trading.

There is a rich vein of history running through the market to offer inspiration to any author. Back in the 1860s Portobello Road was just a simple country lane where farmers sold milk to local people. All that changed in 1864 with the opening of the Metropolitan Railway Notting Hill station – now known as Ladbroke Grove station – which transformed the area.

The word limit for the competition is 2,000 words. For more information, including full terms and conditions, email libris@rbkc.gov.uk


Winning entries will be published in an anthology produced by the council's library service.

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Council to spend £10m buying 'crisis' housing

THE Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is to stump up £10million to buy "a significant number" of high quality homes for temporary accommodation.

Properties in the private housing market will be considered up to a maximum value of £450,000. The council, which made the decision on Thursday, July 16th, anticipates that it could buy up to 39 properties (consisting of 27 two-bed properties and 12 three-bed properties).

Since 2010 the number of households in temporary accommodation has been on the rise and with fewer affordable properties available in the private rented sector, the council is considering locations including London, the M25 area and southern counties.

Councillor Nick Paget-Brown,

● By LWN reporter
news@londonweeklynews.co.uk

the Leader of the Royal Borough, said: "The reality is we are facing a great shortage of properties in which to house those in greatest need. The pool available to us in the private sector is falling, and with the number of homeless households on our list rising, we believe purchasing our own stock is the right strategy to not only increase supply but contain costs."

"In an ideal world we would like to buy properties in Kensington and Chelsea, but the numbers simply don't stack up. In reality we could only buy a handful of homes here, but by looking further afield we can purchase significantly more, making a huge difference to those on our waiting list."

The council plans to start pur-

chasing properties that are a commutable distance from the Royal Borough in the autumn, with the first household moving in during March 2016.

A number of other boroughs have also started to invest in the private housing market to help provide temporary accommodation. Oxford has agreed £10million and Ealing £21million. Westminster City Council and Croydon Council have also agreed to purchase properties.

Since March 2010 the number of households in temporary accommodation has been rising. The figures at March 31st were: 2015 – 1,862 2014 – 1,819 2013 – 1,686 2012 – 1,425 2011 – 1,209 2010 – 994 .

The council spends approximately £25million per year on temporary accommodation (tenants are responsible for the rent which is recharged to them). The temporary

accommodation budget for 2015/16 has been increased by £1million and the need for further budget increases is anticipated in future years. With the introduction of the Housing Benefit cap it has become increasingly difficult to negotiate rents within the TA subsidy level. By purchasing properties the council would have more flexibility and control over how long they use properties for temporary accommodation.

The current 28-day leasing arrangements are easy for the landlord and agents to give notice on. Currently there are over 116 units that landlords want back and with one supplier the council has seen its portfolio fall from over 100 properties to just 16 since April 2012.

Rents will be set at the temporary accommodation housing subsidy levels.



£100,000 in grants to help people have fun

WESTWAY Trust, a charity that aims to improve the Westway area in Notting Hill, has announced it will award up to £100,000 in community funding this year through its new Community Grants programme. Applications for funding are now open and will be allocated in two rounds in 2015/6.

Community Grants will be available to not-for-profit organisations or groups of individuals who want to address social and community issues or bring the community together to celebrate the 150th year anniversary of Portobello & Golborne Markets. Groups and organisations must be located within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Westway Trust is particularly interested to hear from groups or organisations with a focus on communities living in North Kensington and / or close to the Westway estate.

Angela McConville, Westway Trust's Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted to offer this vital funding for local groups and organisations. We hope the Community Grants programme will fund a vibrant range of community activities. We hope local people will use it to come together, have fun and celebrate the rich culture and heritage of the community, particularly in this special year that celebrates the 150th anniversary of the Portobello Market."

Two types of grants are being offered to eligible organisations, worth £500 and £2,500 each.

Grants of up to £500 will be available for one-off community celebrations and events, including per-

By LWN reporter

formance arts workshops, garden and street parties, arts projects and other events that invite the community to participate and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the market.

Meanwhile, grants worth up to £2,500 will be available for a range of projects that support and improve the health and well-being of the local community as well as projects that provide economic opportunities. Westway Trust also wants to hear from groups who can celebrate local talent and diversity. This includes disability sports events, mental health projects, employment and volunteering programmes, and skills training.

Forging partnerships

"We have already had 120 organisations contact us expressing interest in our grants programme. We know it's tough for local charities at the moment with the pressure on public funding. We are delighted to be in a position to award funding to local groups and look forward to forging new partnerships with projects that form an important part of this vibrant community, to work together and create a brighter future for the Westway," Angela said.

The Community Grants programme will host two rounds of applications each year. Applications for the 2015/6 period will be accepted from 3 August – 14 September and 4 – 25 January. Organisations are restricted to one application per funding round.

See Under The Westway on page 9

Vibrant music mix at Westway festival

THIS year's Westway Trust Community Festival on Sunday, July 26th will be bigger and better than ever with a vibrant mix of music and family fun.

The festival takes place on Portobello Green from 12noon to 6pm. It's a FREE fun day out for all the family and will include a live stage, children's activities, local stalls and international food on offer.

Showcasing the diversity and talents of the area, it will involve a wide range of community groups, organisations and schools.

The performers include:

- Sankoulean – West African drumming and dance group
- The No Frills Band – UK folk band
- Cheb Hamza – Moroccan singer
- Tribo band – Samba reggae band

- The Rhythm Studio – West London's rock and pop music academy students
- Electric Dance Collective – Caribbean street dance group
- Abundance Arts & Healthier Life 4 You – African dance performance and workshops.
- Pimento Supplementary School – Dance performance
- Children's activities include a circus skills workshop, bouncy castle, gladiator jousting, graffiti art, African drumming, arts and crafts, face painting, and more.

Westway Trust Chief Executive, Angela McConville, said: "This will be the fifth Westway Community Festival and it has grown to become a really important event in our Westway Presents calendar. It's just part of the exciting and diverse programme of arts, culture and entertainment we

Road closures for major cycle race

MAJOR road closures will begin from 5am on Sunday, August 2nd in preparation for Prudential RideLondon.

This event will see both amateur and professional cyclists tackling a course that runs from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park for the amateurs and Horse Guards Parade for the professionals, through central London before heading out of the city and on to Surrey. The riders then return back through London for a finish on The Mall.

Closing 100 miles of roads and bridges across London and Surrey will have a major impact on traffic, public transport and parking. It is not just the roads the cyclists ride along that will be affected. Many other local roads will be

closed to traffic from the early hours of Sunday, August 2nd to allow the event to pass safely through the borough. It is anticipated roads will remain closed until the early evening. Vehicles parked on the route will be removed. If you normally park your vehicle on any of the roads affected you will need to make alternative arrangements on Sunday 2 August.

Road closure timetable on Sunday, August 2nd

5am – outward-bound roads closed across London. In Kensington and Chelsea the following roads will close at this time:

- Knightsbridge
- Brompton Road
- Cromwell Road (A4)

The roads closed on the out-

ward-bound route are expected to reopen at 3pm.

7am – inward-bound roads will close across London. In Kensington and Chelsea the following roads will close at this time:

- King's Road
- Cheyne Walk
- Ashburnham Road
- Cremorne Road
- Chelsea Embankment

The roads closed on the inward-bound route are expected to reopen at 7.30pm.

All timings are subject to change. For up-to-date information please see the organiser's website www.PrudentialRideLondon.co.uk/roadclosures or follow on @RideLondon.

Where To Find Your New Local Newspaper

London News WEEKLY pick up points

Sainsbury's Store	Melbourne Avenue	West Ealing	W13 9BZ
Tesco Metro	94 Church Street	Paddington	NW8 8EX
Tesco Classic Metro	17-25 Regent Street	London	SW1Y 4LR
Sainsbury's Store	38 Stratton Street	Mayfair	W1J 8LT
Sainsbury's Store	15-17 Tottenham Court Road	Central London	W1T 1BJ
Co-op	504-506 Harrow Road	Paddington	W9 3QA
Tesco Classic Metro	22-25 Bedford Street	London	WC2E 8EQ
Co-op	Golden Cross House	London	WC2R 0RG
Notting Hill Gate Library	1 Pembridge Square	Notting Hill	W2 4EW
Kensal Library	20 Golborne Road		W10 5PF

Westminster & Pimlico NEWS WEEKLY pick up points

Sainsbury's Store	99 Wilton Road	Pimlico	SW1V 1DT
Co-op	104-105 Berwick Street	Soho	W1F 0QS
Tesco Metro	18-28 Warwick Way	Westminster	SW1V 1RX
Tesco Classic Metro	Dean Street	London	W1D 3RS
Tesco Classic Metro	10-16 Goudge Street	London	W1T 2QB
Tesco Metro	90-100 Edgware Road	Westminster	W2 2EA
Co-op	19-21 Store Street	Westminster	WC1E 7DB
Coach & Horses Pub	23 Greek Street	Soho	W1D 5DH
Pimlico Library	Lupus Street	Pimlico	SW1V 3EY

Kensington & Chelsea NEWS WEEKLY pick up points

Co-op	210-212 Earls Court Road	Kensington	SW5 9QB
Sainsbury's Store	158a Cromwell Road	Kensington	SW7 4EJ
Tesco Metro	146-148 High Street	Kensington	W8 6SU
Sainsbury's Store	Ladbroke Grove	London	W10 5AA
Tesco Metro	224-226 Portobello Rd	Notting Hill	W11 1LJ
Tesco Metro	114-120 Notting Hill Gate	Notting Hill	W11 3QE
Tesco Super Store	West Cromwell Road	Kensington	W14 8PB
Kensington Central Library	Philimore Walk	Kensington	W8 7RX
North Kensington Library	108 Ladbroke Grove	Kensington	W11 1PZ
Brompton Library	210 Old Brompton Road	London	SW5 0BS
The Tabernacle, Notting Hill	35 Powis Square	Notting Hill	W11 2AY
Chelsea Library	Chelsea Old Town Hall	Chelsea	SW3 5EZ
Chelsea Sports Centre	Chelsea Manor Street	Chelsea	SW3 5PL

Fulham Chronicle LONDON WEEKLY NEWS pick up points

Sainsbury's Store	51 Townsmead Road	Fulham	SW6 2SY
Sainsbury's Store	Fulham Broadway Retail Centre	Fulham	SW6 1BW
Co-op	254 North End Road	London	SW6 1NJ
Co-op	314 Lillie Road	Fulham	SW6 7PS
Co-op	60 Parsons Green Lane	Fulham	SW6 4HU
Sainsbury's Store	2-3 Kings Mall	Kings Mall	W6 0PZ
Fulham Library	596 Fulham Road		SW6 5NX
Tesco Super Store	180 Shepherd's Bush Road	London	W6 7NL
The Grove Neighbourhood Centre	7 Bradmore Park	Hammersmith	W6 0DT
Morrisons	114-116 Shepherd's Bush Centre	London	W12 8PP

'Join us' call after market makeover

● By GEOFF BAKER

geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

FOLLOWING a £1.1m makeover, pitches are now available at one of London's oldest and most loved markets, Berwick Street Market in Soho.

Westminster City Council is looking for high-quality and unique first-time traders to apply to run a market stall, from one to six days a week, for as little as £10.61 a day.

Cllr Daniel Astaire, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development, said: "Running a market stall can be one of the best ways for entrepreneurs to road test their business ideas, without risking huge overheads. Pizza Pilgrims is just one example.

"What is now a hugely successful chain of restaurants started out as two brothers selling pizzas from a stall on Berwick Street Market.

"This is an exciting and affordable way for fledgling start-ups and first-time entrepreneurs to



■ OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: Soho's Berwick Street Market.

launch their new business, in the heart of London."

Berwick Street Market began its life in the 1770s when shopkeepers displayed their wares on the pavements. It quickly earned its reputation as one of the most vibrant and diverse markets in London, and was the first place to sell tomatoes in 1880, and grapefruit in 1890. The market continues to live up to its reputation, with seasonal fresh produce, street food, gifts, crafts, fashion

and more from Monday to Saturday.

"Thanks to the new lighting, surfaces and facilities that have been installed as part of our regeneration programme, Berwick Street Market has truly been transformed into Soho's local high street," added Cllr Astaire.

New traders are encouraged to apply by August 10. Priority will be given to Westminster residents and applicants offering something unique to the market.

Writing for the **London Weekly News** every week, London's most outspoken entrepreneur

Charlie Pipes Up!



Nothing wrong making strike rules democratic

WE keep being told one of the biggest threats to the economy is poor productivity.

Finding the exact cause of the so-called 'productivity puzzle' is as tricky as navigating London's sewers without a torch.

However, it appears there's one thing that puts a serious dent in productivity that we could sort out immediately – and that's strikes.

According to new numbers from the Office of National Statistics the number of working days lost to strikes has jumped by 77 per cent in a year! In 2014, 788,000 working days were lost as a result of labour disputes up from 444,000 in 2013.

This is higher than the average for the 1990s and 2000s, but, as you'd expect lower than the 1980s when industrial action was more common.

That said, it's still far too common for my liking, and the liking of the British economy, and that's why I can't see anything even slightly wrong with at least 50 per cent of union members involved in a dispute having to cast their vote in order for a strike vote to be valid.

Anything else is the tyranny of the union bosses, whose loyal foot soldiers will back them to the hilt, forcing the perhaps 80 per cent who did not vote into a strike, or face being labelled a scab.

And it's this cynical calculation that for decades has allowed union bosses to retain power over the increasing numbers of their members who do not vote for strikes. And that's why it must be stopped.

If there is genuine desire amongst a membership to take industrial action it cannot be too much to ask that every second person bothers to cast a vote to

strike. Any argument from the unions that the silent majority are silent because they agree, and see no need to vote, falls because clearly under the new rules they will revert to marking a ballot paper with their previously privately held desire to strike.

And to those who continue to argue that the Government was elected with 36.9 per cent of the vote (from an impressive 66.1 per cent turnout), perhaps you could ask a bookie about the difference between a two horse race and one with a large field? Or learn to divide by a number larger than two and see what happens!

And if people still want to argue with statistics, try this one. Len McCluskey was 'elected' General Secretary of the

Unite union with 64.5 per cent of the votes cast, in what was a two horse race with Jerry Hicks who received 35.5 percent, on a turnout of 15.2 per cent of those eligible to vote.

So Mr McCluskey was elected by 9.8 per cent of the almost 1.5 million members of his union, meaning more than 1.3 million members didn't give him their vote.

It would seem to me that the real reason the unions don't want this new democratic approach applied to industrial disputes is because it threatens to undermine the authority of their leaders, and bring focus onto their highly questionable mandates.

This is not, as last week's BBC headline reads, An Attack On Workers' Rights, it is the opposite.

If you feel strongly about something you can vote to strike. If you don't want to, don't vote and you can't be forced to face the ire and abuse of the militant few, who would rob you of your democratic rights. What's wrong with that?

● You can't be forced to face the ire and abuse of the militant few ●

Views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of this newspaper



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UNDER THE WESTWAY

Cash grants to improve lives

Angela McConville, Chief Executive of Westway Trust, explains how income from business tenants and sports services is being used to support the North Kensington community

TODAY I would like to talk about an exciting opportunity as the Westway Trust launches a new community grants fund worth £100,000.

It's a chance for not-for-profit groups based or working in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea to apply for cash awards that will be made available for events or projects that benefit people living in the borough, particularly North Kensington.

We will be asking applicants to show us how they will spend the money in a way that will achieve our dual goals of improving the lives of local people, in terms of good health and economic prosperity.

We're aware that in an era of austerity, it's a tough time for charities and we hope our initiative will help. They can apply for two types of grants, worth up to £500 and £2,500

each. Awards of up to £500 will be made for one-off community celebrations and events, such as performance art workshops, garden and street parties, arts projects and other events.

In choosing who receives the £500 grant awards, there will be a particular focus on this year's 150th anniversary of the Portobello & Golborne markets. The markets are the heart of the area and we aim to help ensure they continue to thrive. We want to give small grants for events that will celebrate them - and ensure people have some fun in doing so.

Grants of up to £2,500 will go to projects that support our strategic goals, and we particularly want to hear from groups who can celebrate local talent and diversity. This includes youth arts programmes, mentoring schemes, disability sports events, mental health projects, employment and volunteering programmes. We believe that in the hands of grassroots organisations, a little funding can make a huge impact.

Across the Westway estate there are many groups providing advocacy, advice, support, education, mentoring and skills development. They also provide friendship, networks and a sense of belonging. We want to encourage that. A vibrant community and

cultural sector is central to our vision of the Westway being a distinct and attractive place to live, work and play.

Over the past month the Westway Trust team have been out and about attending local events and festivals to raise awareness of our community grants programme. Already 120 groups have contacted us expressing an interest in the funding. This is really encouraging as it demonstrates that there is a genuine enthusiasm for this approach. And we want to do more of this. As we work on ambitious plans to develop our estate over the coming years, we hope to be able to generate even more value so that we can reinvest back into local talent and voluntary action.

Proud track record

Providing support for the local third sector was part of our founding constitution more than four decades ago. It's in our DNA. We have a proud track record of helping local organisations to grow and thrive. Whether it's Westway Community Transport, Open Age, or the many supplementary schools we support, there is evidence all around of the commitment of the Westway Trust to supporting a thriving community sector. Ultimately effective, sustainable charities working in partnership with us will ensure that our

community is provided with many opportunities to fulfil its potential.

We have re-launched the grants programme this year after a review of the system for making awards. We are establishing a panel that involves not just Westway staff and trustees, but local and pan-London external advisors and experts, to ensure there is transparency and rigour in how we award funding. We want to know that the money will be well spent and that we can evaluate the difference that it is making locally.

It is perhaps timely to remind readers that we don't receive taxpayers' cash and that the community grants are funded from income we generate from our business tenants and our sports services. As we work on plans to develop the estate further and attract other funders to join forces with us, we hope to be able to increase the community grants fund in future years.

Let me close by inviting you all to come along and join the fun of the Westway Trust Community Festival on Portobello Green on Sunday July 26th from 12noon to 6pm. More than 40 groups are signed up, and members of the Trust team will be on hand to talk further about the community grants programme. I'll be there with my family and look forward to chatting with you then.

Letters to the Editor

New school is 'madness'

■ AS I was driving back from Heathrow this morning in heavy traffic I had time to observe the huge number of hideous new buildings being built alongside the M4. In the distance I could see the partial skeleton of the Earls Court Exhibition Centre; the abandoned looking Apollo Theatre and other smaller, scattered Victorian and Art Deco buildings soon to disappear, no doubt, in this madness of new buildings that architects should be embarrassed to put their name to.

It is probably too late, and coming from a "too" unimportant voice, the beautiful Victorian school building on Draycott Avenue is going to be torn down and replaced by a new "superschool" to accommodate 60 more students. What madness! Look around London - in Victoria, in Fulham, in Chelsea - and everywhere you will see buildings being bulldozed, not because they are poorly built and falling into disrepair, but because councils think they have better ideas or there is money and greed attached to it somewhere along the line.

My own home in the 70s, Thurloe Lodge, in Thurloe Place is at this moment being torn down as is the house next door (former home of Margot Fonteyn while Thurloe Lodge had been owned by Nadia Narina, prima ballerina of Sadlers Wells) and it appears that No. 33 Thurloe Square is going to be quietly demolished (once the home of Henry Cole with a blue plaque on the house). All this to allow a wealthy businessman to build himself a "luxury villa".

Some years ago I took adult education courses at Marlborough School so I am familiar with the interior. It is a solid, well built building as the Victorian structures seem to have been, and it is a great pity that, in the minds of the council, the new "superschool" will be an improvement. Just look around London - in every direction - you see cranes and and six months later really unsightly buildings. An excuse for "housing shortage"? Progress? Improvement? Rather, I think, beautiful, solid buildings are being torn down and not particularly for altruistic reasons and, when it

is too late, it will be regretted. Or, maybe it won't. Maybe we will just go to see an exhibition at the V & A in 15 or 20 years time and feel a little bit melancholy that these lovely buildings have disappeared forever. But, then perhaps our hearts will be colder and the word "nostalgia" will just be an archaic word of little importance.

I feel that the Victorian buildings and the Georgian buildings are to London and England what Pompeii and the Forum and the Colosseum are to Italy and Palmyra to Syria, and so forth. They are the foundations of a great city which should be allowed to remain so that they can be remembered.

S. Parviz (by email)

Travelling by bus in London is a nightmare

■ I AM writing in relation to your front page coverage of the London roasters which we are having to travel on.

When these buses were first put on the road I wrote to Boris Johnson but nothing materialised. I have since written to Mark Field at the House of Commons. He replied but unfortunately there was nothing he could do.

I have also written to Kit Malthouse at County Hall. I have had a reply from somebody on his behalf and they are contacting TFL. I am awaiting a further reply at this time.

On your coverage of this matter it states that windows do not open upstairs, they also do not open on the lower deck and it makes the journey unbearable. I have seen people struggling to breathe.

Something seriously needs to be done about this. Travelling on a bus now is a nightmare for some people. With summers becoming warmer and more humid, this is an awful way to travel.

P. Gray (by email)

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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

School news



■ **HEAD START:** Simon Sheehan, director of the DM Thomas Foundation for Young People (centre), with students and teachers at the Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, along with DMTFYP staff (back row) and members of Eastman Chemical Company, who help make the charity fundraising ducks.

Photos Paul Rogers, Pellier Noir

Children are all out for a duck!

PUPILS, teachers, charity volunteers and business workers have come together to back a fast-growing fundraising campaign designed to support disadvantaged children. Chemical company Eastman and the DM Thomas Foundation for Young People have launched "Ducks for Change: River Dash," an interactive mobile application game in support of the Ducks for Change initiative. This initiative sees little plastic ducks sold in hotels around Europe to raise funds for the foundation's work supporting young people in need, particularly those who are disabled, in hospitals and hospices, and homeless. On July 9th the new mobile game was tested out at the Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children in Camley Street, West London.



■ **CONCENTRATE!** A young student plays Ducks for Change: River Dash, a digital game that backs charity work for disadvantaged children.



■ **WATCH IT!** Two students, left, play Ducks for Change: River Dash with their teacher. Above: Leri Price (left of the picture in a purple T-shirt) from the DM Thomas Foundation with a student who has completed a level of the game, and teacher (right)



■ **QUACK TROOPS!** Students at the Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children with their charity fundraising ducks!



...and Aussie cricket ace hopes he won't be

AUSTRALIA'S Test cricket captain Michael Clarke took a break from the rigours of the Ashes series against England last week to put smiles on the faces of budding young batsmen and bowlers at a London school. He took part in a Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) community coaching session at St Edwards Catholic Primary School in Marylebone on Wednesday. Clarke partnered MCC community coach Ricky Reynolds for the session, organised by Cricket

Australia's official airline, Qantas. Clarke offered batting and fielding advice to the class, before signing autographs and posing for photographs with the children and MCC's community mascot, Ernie the Ashes Urn. The visit formed part of the MCC Community Development Strategy, which this year is focusing on developing grassroots cricket in the local area around the Lord's ground in St John's Wood. To find out more visit www.lords.org/community

London WEEKLY News

ISSUE 34

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Thursday, July 23rd 2015

Rescue pilot role puts pressure on 'four jobs' prince



■ **HIGH PRESSURE:** Concerns have been voiced about Prince William's demanding helicopter rescue pilot job with the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

By Geoff Baker

QUESTIONS are being asked about whether Prince William should be given at least a year's sabbatical from conducting all royal duties – including running his charities.

Royal-watchers are wondering if William should be given a "get-out-of-jail card" to relieve him of royal work because of the highly-stressful and rigorous demands of his new job as an emergency rescue pilot.

Concern has risen that perhaps too much is being asked of the future king now that he has typically chosen one of the world's most-demanding roles as his day job for at least the next two years.

As a helicopter pilot for the East Anglian Air Ambulance the Duke of Cambridge has committed to working up to 10 hours a day flying mercy missions which are stressful enough on their own – without his added responsibilities as a young father of two very young children, running 40 charities and patronages and his grooming to take over the running of the Duchy of Cornwall estates.

As a pilot William will be working a four-days-on-four-days-off rota, constantly involved in a life-or-death race against time and in a state of high alert for every moment of his shifts as, by the nature of the work, he is dealing with seriously-injured victims of traumatic road accidents, heart attack and stroke victims and babies needing to be rushed to hospital.

If on the day shift, William has to get up by at least 6.0 am



■ **UPWARDLY MOBILE:** The Duke of Cambridge has won admirers for his determination to make a valid contribution to society with his air ambulance flying role.

to be able to report for work at the early start-time of seven. If on the night shift, he could be flying all through the night. The air ambulance service says the prince could be flying up to 10 missions a day.

"It's an awful lot to ask of anyone, let alone when he has his royal duties on top and perhaps he should be allowed a get-out-of-jail card from his royal work for a year or so while he does this important rescue work for the community," said one concerned royal observer.

The air ambulance is a charity which must raise £8.6 million each year to support its operation. It works alongside the East of England Ambulance Service, providing cover across four counties.

Its medical crews can administer life-saving treatment at the scene of emergencies or while in the air. The helicopters can

reach patients anywhere in the region within 25 minutes and can often transport patients to hospital more quickly than if they travelled by road.

For the first few months of his new job, William will be working the full rota but after that his time will be cut to two-thirds of the normal shift pattern to allow for his royal duties.

Now some are asking if it would not be easier for the have-a-go hero if he is relieved of royal duties to allow him to concentrate entirely on his 999-response job.

"Having four days off to recover is all very well when you've not got a great deal to do on those days off, but William's life is more complicated and demanding than that," said the commentator.

"If he has to spend his days

TURN TO PAGE 12

INSIDE YOUR FREE ROYAL NEWSPAPER



Queen's birthday present for her favourite causes

PAGE 17



Princess Anne to visit Docklands sailing centre

PAGE 12

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ROYAL LONDON

Concern over public-spirited William's workload

Is the sky the limit for busy Duke?

FROM PAGE 11

off as a working royal, with his charity work, conducting investitures, representing The Queen at parades and State occasions and being groomed for future roles, when is he actually going to get any time off to relax?

"Plus, even though he is clearly enjoying his role as a young father, as any young father knows that does get tiring; babies do wake up in the night and disturb your sleep. If he had chosen a desk job, the demands wouldn't have been so potentially-exhausting. But William, as is his way, has chosen one of the most stressful jobs in the world."

Last year the pilots of the East Anglian Air Ambulance flew 1,785 missions, a 20% increase on the emergency flights of the year before. The ambulance is on call 365 days of the year, so William could be working Christmas Day and might have to miss family birthdays and anniversaries because he is in the cockpit saving lives.

And none of the flights will be a picnic. Most of last year's missions [467 of them] dealt with racing to hospital road accident victims who are too badly injured to be taken by ambulance.

"When I got the job, I was already an experienced pilot – but I'd never even seen a broken leg. On my second day, we went to a 250-car pile-up, with four people dead. It certainly isn't for everyone," said one of the pilots for the nearby Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance.

"For the air ambulance to be called,



■ **LIFE SAVER:** Prince William works for East Anglian Air Ambulance.

it's got to be serious. We deal with a lot of car crashes and industrial accidents, and we went to the London bombings in July 2005. You see horrible sights, and it can be tough for a new pilot."

The air ambulance also comes to the rescue of a high proportion of cardiac cases – 319 in 2014 – where every second counts for those who have suffered a heart attack or stroke.

"Every minute of an emergency rescue pilot's life on a shout is urgent, the concentration levels are intense, they are dashing against time and calling on great skills and all of their training to land the chopper on roads, in back gardens and wherever it takes to get to the victim fast," said a veteran emergency worker.

Stress tests on ordinary airline pilots have revealed that they face stress 95.2% for of their work and endure time-related pressure 89.8% of their

shift. But when a pilot is dashing a critically-injured or seriously-ill person to hospital, the pressure of the crucial importance of every second rises to 100%.

It takes an especially tough sort of flier to take on a job as an air hero and experts say a lot of them do it for the buzz.

"People get into this work for the juice, the adrenaline rush," said air ambulance doctor Tony Bleetman.

But for William, it seems that besides the buzz he is compelled by an over-riding compulsion to earn his privilege as a future king and to make an important contribution to society. Typically, he has forgone his £40,000 salary as a rescue pilot – which he is donating to charity – and he says that he hopes his work will keep him staying sensible and able to rise above the praise and attention that comes with being heir to a throne.

"I'm trying to do what I can and trying to be a decent individual," he said.

"It's sort of a follow-on from where I was in the military with my search and rescue role. There are many of the same kind of skills and a job like this is very worthwhile, valuable and there's an element of duty. It's an important area for me to be involved in to continue my career and training. For me it's a really important point to be grounded. I feel doing a job like this really helps me to be grounded and that's the core of what I'm trying to become."

What he is trying to – and no doubt will – become is a great king but his "homework" for that position is demanding enough without the pressure of spending 182 days of the year on high alert and racing to save lives in the air.

For on his "off" days, William has to help with the running of 33 charities of which he is patron, plus another three that he administrates with Prince Harry and four more that he runs with the Duchess of Cambridge. He is renowned for taking his charity work very seriously and refuses to be just a titular head of organisations including the homeless charity Centrepont, the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, the FA, National Playing Fields Association, BAFTA and the Royal Marsden Hospital.

The workload could prove exhausting, although the mercy-dashing prince says he is sure that he can handle the multi-tasking.

"At some point there's going to be a lot more responsibility and pressure but

at the moment I'm juggling it and enjoying it," he said. "While I'm still relatively young, I will manage the two jobs the best I can."

But on top of his rescue and charity work, William is also having to quietly study for another job, for when Prince Charles takes to the throne he will assume the title of Duke of Cornwall and he is already on a programme to learn the ropes.

The Secretary of the Duchy, Alistair Martin, has revealed that William is attending the Duchy Council and has to regularly study updates on projects affecting the 135,000-acre estate.

"I meet with him on a regular basis and brief him and respond to questions from him and seek his views," said Mr Martin.

He said many of the projects undertaken by the Duchy will take years to come to be and will fall to Prince William to see through. If he takes the same close interest as Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall in the estate, it means controlling the huge business empire of the Duchy, with its farms, forests, business premises and homes stretching from the Isles of Scilly to The Oval cricket ground.

But despite concern that as a pilot, charity chief, businessman and a new father "Billy Four Jobs" is pushing it in his relentless drive to prove his contribution to society, Prince William is shrugging off calls that it's too much to ask of him.

"It's no more difficult than what everyone else has to do," he said modestly on his first day as the rescue royal.

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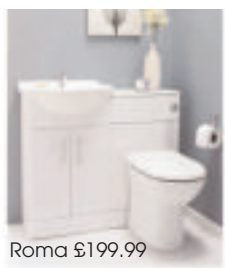
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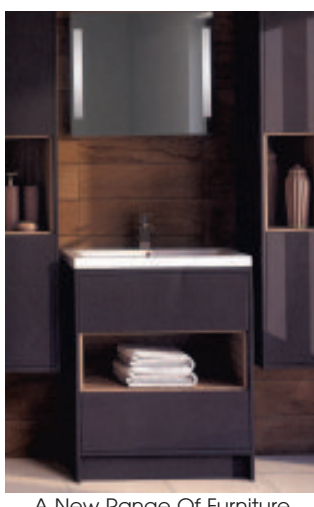
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FULL details of future and recent events in the ever-busy diaries of the many members of The Royal Family are available from the official website www.royal.gov.uk but here's the London schedule for the week ahead.

● Tuesday, July 21st

Princess Alexandra Patron, Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest, will open the Simco Wing at 121-131 East India Dock Road, Poplar E14.

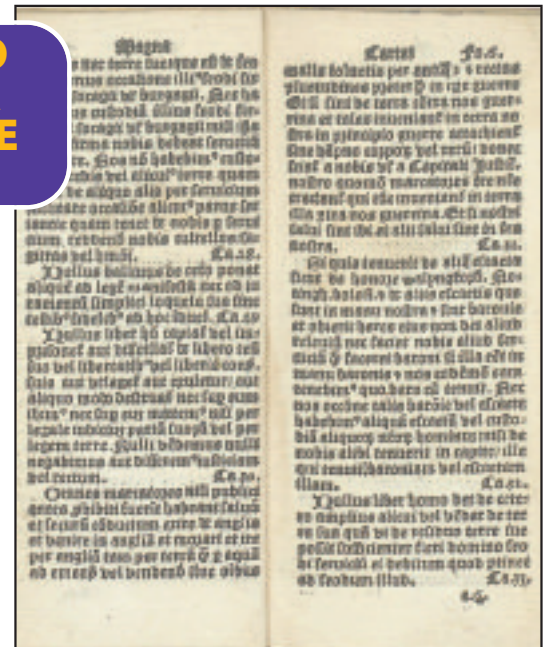
● Tuesday, July 28th

The Princess Royal, as President of the Royal Yachting Association, will visit the Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre, Isle of Dogs E14.

The Princess Royal, as President of the British Olympic Association, will attend an Executive Board Meeting at Charlotte Street W1.

The Duke of Kent and Princess Alexandra will open the Summer Exhibition commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta at the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, Parliament Square.

Princess Alexandra will visit Integrated Neurological Services, Hampton Road, Twickenham.



■ **LIFE SAVER:** The Duke of Kent and Princess Alexandra will open the Summer Exhibition marking the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta. Above: the first printed copy of Magna Carta, dated 1506. Below, the Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre, which will welcome the Princess Royal next Tuesday.





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Hull v Fulham	Wed 19 Aug	19:45
Fulham v Huddersfield	Sat 22 Aug	15:00
Rotherham v Fulham	Sat 29 Aug	15:00

September 2015

Fulham v Blackburn	Sun 13 Sep	12:00
Fulham v Wolves	Wed 16 Sep	19:45
Sheff Wed v Fulham	Sat 19 Sep	15:00
Fulham v QPR	Fri 25 Sep	19:45

October 2015

Charlton v Fulham	Sat 3 Oct	15:00
Middlesbrough v Fulham	Sat 17 Oct	15:00
Fulham v Leeds	Wed 21 Oct	19:45
Fulham v Reading	Sat 24 Oct	13:30
Bristol City v Fulham	Sat 31 Oct	15:00

November 2015

Burnley v Fulham	Tue 3 Nov	19:45
Fulham v Birmingham	Sat 7 Nov	15:00
MK Dons v Fulham	Sat 21 Nov	15:00
Fulham v Preston	Sat 28 Nov	15:00

December 2015

Nottm Forest v Fulham
Fulham v Brentford
Fulham v Ipswich
Bolton v Fulham
Derby v Fulham
Fulham v Rotherham

January 2016

Fulham v Sheff Wed
Wolves v Fulham
Huddersfield v Fulham
Fulham v Hull
Blackburn v Fulham

February 2016

Fulham v Derby
QPR v Fulham
Fulham v Charlton
Leeds v Fulham
Fulham v Middlesbrough

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Tue 15 Dec 19:45
Sat 19 Dec 15:00
Sat 26 Dec 15:00
Tue 29 Dec 19:45

Sat 2 Jan 15:00
Tue 12 Jan 19:45
Sat 16 Jan 15:00
Sat 23 Jan 15:00
Sat 30 Jan 15:00

Sat 6 Feb 15:00
Sat 13 Feb 15:00
Sat 20 Feb 15:00
Tue 23 Feb 19:45
Sat 27 Feb 15:00

March 2016

Reading v Fulham
Fulham v Burnley
Fulham v Bristol City
Birmingham v Fulham

April 2016

Fulham v MK Dons
Preston v Fulham
Fulham v Cardiff
Brighton v Fulham
Ipswich v Fulham
Fulham v Nottm Forest
Brentford v Fulham

May 2016

Fulham v Bolton

Sat 5 Mar 15:00
Tue 8 Mar 19:45
Sat 12 Mar 15:00
Sat 19 Mar 15:00

Sat 2 Apr 15:00
Tue 5 Apr 19:45
Sat 9 Apr 15:00
Fri 15 Apr 19:45
Tue 19 Apr 19:45
Sat 23 Apr 15:00
Sat 30 Apr 15:00

Sat 7 May 12:30



Fixtures are correct at time of print. For updates during the season visit:
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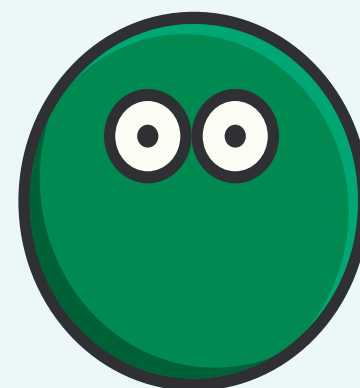


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Picnic on the pitch at Craven Cottage

FULHAM Football Club opened the gates of Craven Cottage last week for a Picnic on the Pitch attended by supporters and local residents.

Over 500 people attended this unique afternoon as fans made their way past the iconic Cottage, through the players' tunnel and onto the hallowed turf.

The event which was free to attend with a ticket obtained by registering on the club's website, included family activities such as inflatables, balloon modellers, face painters and a visit from mascot Billy the Badger.

Those that attended were able to set up their picnic blankets on the pitch and enjoy their own food and drink or purchase items from the Cottage Café.



Photo courtesy of fulhamfc.com

Fulham Football Club has long been regarded as a family club. Events such as Picnic on the Pitch and the club's efforts to attract young fans and families to Craven Cottage by offering competitively priced junior tickets and enhancing the overall matchday experience in the family zone, have been contributing factors in recently obtaining "The Football League Family Excellence Award" for the 2014/15 season.

The award recognises the outstanding experience provided by the club for young fans and

families. Fulham Football Club is keen to grow the Family Zone further next season and attract young supporters and families to all areas of the ground by offering a 50 per cent reduction on all junior tickets (under 17 years old) compared to last season, making it more affordable for young fans and families to attend matches in the capital.

The 2015-16 season tickets are competitively priced with adult prices starting at £259 and junior prices starting from just £47.

What's more, a young person's season ticket for supporters aged 17-21, as well as season tickets for over 65s, start from £219 which works out at less than £10 per match, reaffirming Fulham's commitment of rewarding the loyalty of its fans, whilst at the same time attracting new supporters.

The 2015-16 season tickets are available to purchase online – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: fulhamfc.com/seasontickets or by calling 0843 208 1234 (option 3) Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm.

The Cottage is 'the place to be' for new-signing O'Hara

JAMIE O'Hara believes his footballing experience could come in useful for Fulham's youngsters this season - both on and off the pitch.

The 28-year-old joined the Whites on a free transfer last week, putting pen to paper on a one-year deal.

A product of Tottenham Hotspur's academy, O'Hara had previously played for Chesterfield,

Millwall, Portsmouth and Wolverhampton Wanderers. He joined Blackpool on a short-term contract last November, playing 28 times for the Seasiders and earning their Player of the Year gong.

"This is a massive opportunity to push on again," O'Hara told the official website. "We've got a great squad of players and you need everyone to get promoted. Hopefully I'll be involved and be a big part. "On and off the pitch, I'll try and help the young players. Hopefully I can be an influence in the dressing room and help get this club back to where it deserves to be."

O'Hara signed for the Whites after impressing during a trial period with the club.

"I have to thank the manager for giving me the opportunity," continued O'Hara. "He watched me last season and said I played really well against Fulham. He gave me the chance to come in and be around the squad and I loved it, straight away I got in with the boys."

"He liked me as a player and wanted me to come in so he could have a look at my fitness. I knew it was a great opportunity for me to join a massive club."

"I was desperate to play at a club like Fulham. It's a fantastic football club with great tradition. I've always admired the club so as soon as I got the call to come in I wanted to show I could play at a place like this."

The left-footed midfielder also revealed the Cottage had been something of a lucky ground for him in the past, adding: "I've had a few cracking games at the Cottage. I always seemed to play well there and now I'll be playing there a lot more. Every time I went to the Cottage it felt like a place I'd like to be."



■ NEW signing Jamie O'Hara - "I've always played well at Craven Cottage".

Photo courtesy of fulhamfc.com

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ROYAL LONDON

Monarch's 90th year promises a great deal

MOST people get presents on their birthday – but when The Queen turns 90 next year she is planning on giving gifts instead.

As reported last week, when Her Majesty marks her official birthday on June 12th she will host a huge party on the Mall with 10,000 guests.

Of them, some 7,500 seats at the enormous picnic of cucumber sandwiches, scones and jam will go to the charities and associations of which The Queen is Patron or President.

But the birthday party invitations for The Queen's causes are much more significant – and stand to be much more beneficial too – than those for the Buckingham Palace garden parties which are traditionally sent as a 'well done' to the great and the good.

For by inviting all of her charities, Her Majesty will be throwing the public spotlight on their causes, which should result in a multi-million-pound boost for their funds.

"Peter Phillips is a PR genius for thinking up this one," said one publicity expert of The Queen's grandson who has created the plan for the birthday bash.

"It's a really very clever idea – to represent the worth and value of The Queen at 90 not by who she is as a head of State, but by all that she does for charity and good causes, and, by doing so, helping them all out.

"There will be a massive media interest in this birthday party and, as Her Majesty doesn't do interviews, the only way that the world's media can properly cover the event will be to focus on the charities – which throws them into the spotlight and by raising their profile it will raise them funds.

"It's very clever and, if you look at the work of her 90 years, very typical of her to be using her unique position and her own birthday for the benefit of others.

"It is also very telling that she has made this particular choice of celebration. As the world's most senior head of state, she could have chosen a big birthday banquet at Buckingham Palace with everybody important from President Obama to the Mayor of London in attendance and all dining off gold plates.

"But instead she has chosen to sit down to a picnic with ordinary people. It's very interesting that nobody famous has thought of this before; usually on their birthdays the famous splash out big parties packed with celebrities. It rather puts that lot in their place that the person who is more famous than all of them put together has opted to spend it instead with the salt of the earth."

But organising the event will be an enormous task for Peter Phillips' company, Sports Entertainments Ltd, for Her Majesty is the head of so many associations and groups. The Prince of Wales gives his patronage to 489 charities and bodies, plus another 10 that he

Queen's birthday present: worldwide publicity for all her favourite charities



■ CHARITY CHAMPION: The Queen will use her 90th birthday party as an opportunity to promote the hundreds of charities she and the Royal Family support and endorse.

shares with the Duchess of Cornwall, patron in her own right of another 105 organisations. Prince Andrew is patron of 166, the Princess Royal of 326, Prince Edward helps 72, the Countess of Wessex 80 and Prince Harry and the Duchess of Cambridge 15 each.

The Queen is patron of 628. Only the Duke of Edinburgh gives royal patronage to more groups, with a whopping 765. Clearly, the Royal Family is the only firm in the world where the older you get the greater your workload.

As The Queen will be hosting the picnic, security vetting all of the guests will be a huge task. Each association will get 12 tickets to lunch with Ma'am in the Mall and doubtless there will be squabbles over who gets to go.

But there are bigger issues than that to sort out – not least, who gets to provide the jam for the scones? For Her Majesty is patron of four organisations who could fill that role – the Mothers' Union, the Mothers' Union of Australia, the Sandringham Women's Institute and the Sandringham Estate Cottage Horticultural Society.

Then there is the issue of who gets to sit where on the third of a mile of trestle tables that will be put up in the Mall. Will there be a top table and which groups should be seated closest to it? Should it be done alphabetically, with Action For Children, the Australian Racing

Museum and the Ayrshire Cattle Society sat up near the fountain, with the likes of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association, the Windsor and Eton Choral Society and YMCA put out of bun-throwing distance up near Trafalgar Square? And there's more. Large video screens will have to be erected the length of the Mall so that everybody present can see The Birthday Girl blow out all of the 90 candles on the cake, which will be a fire hazard in itself, plus what manner of massive birthday card is going to be needed that is big enough for 10,000 people to sign it?

A more serious problem for Peter Phillips and the Palace to solve is which broadcaster should be awarded the TV rights to relay the huge event worldwide to the many nations who will want the footage, especially in the USA where The Queen is a huge favourite.

Although traditionally the BBC wins the TV rights for most royal events, the Corporation is still somewhat in the doghouse over the pig's ear it made of its live coverage of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee river pageant in 2012.

That coverage, presented by *The One Show's* Matt Baker and newsreader Sophie Raworth, was widely-castigated by viewers as "unprepared, ill-informed and patronising", dubbed "dire" by veteran commentator Jonathan Dimbleby and lashed by Stephen Fry as "deeply embarrassing" and "the most mind-numbingly tedious programme in the history of the BBC".

Given the audience of millions of viewers who are expected to follow the birthday party, ITV and Sky will be bidding for the rights and promising to do it better than the Beeb did with the Thames show that sank.

"The television coverage is going to be a tricky issue for the Palace," said one top TV executive, "all of the major broadcasters will be vying for the rights and the BBC will have to pull its socks up in order to land the deal. But they will have to put a top team on it, nobody wants a unique event like this ruined by a party pooper."



■ MALL CONTENT: Hundreds of Royalists will flock to the Mall for The Queen's 90th birthday luncheon

From A to Z, the Queen is patron of 628 charities

Action for Children

– a UK children's charity committed to helping vulnerable and neglected children and young people, and their families, throughout the UK. Through 650 projects and services based around the UK, the charity works with over 300,000 children, young people, and their families. It helps and supports people in areas as diverse as disability respite therapy, foster care, adoption and child neglect.

Women's Royal Army Corps Association

– formed in 1949 on the birth of the WRAC. The association maintains contact between former members of the WRAC and women still serving in the Army, fostering mutual friendship between them and providing for social gatherings, fostering comradeship and welfare, and preserving the traditions of the WRAC.

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SHOWBIZ SPECIAL

Master of the memorable melody is not finished yet

Diamond's life writing songs, it's been a habit he can't quit

by Geoff Baker

SOON they will all be gone, those rock stars of the Sixties. Any year now, all of them will have stopped performing.

They say that they won't. They joke that they will be coming on stage in a wheelchair [Paul McCartney] or if they are too old to stand up, they will sit down and play [Keith Richards], but the truth of the matter is that they will, they will be too elderly to tour or perform like they still do now.

It won't be for want of trying or wanting to, it's just the rule of nature; the big stars of the Sixties and Seventies who are now still performing in their mid-70s just won't be physically up to it within a decade. Age will wither them, as it does the rest of us; voices go at 80, as do hip joints, and guitar-playing fingers get arthritic.

Rock stars hate to admit this and they come up with all sorts of justifications and insinuations to defend the illusion that they are above and beyond biological laws that apply to the rest of humanity. For instance, they will point to Picasso and argue that he was still painting in his 80s.

But Picasso wasn't a performance artist, his work didn't depend upon an audience being present.

No, the sad truth is that the Sixties stars, the second wave of rock and roll, will sadly soon be finished. The first wave – Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Phil Everly – have already gone, and although Sixties stars say, well then we'll just get like the old jazz men and blues icons did and play on gracefully, fine, but they – B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Freddie King – are gone too now.

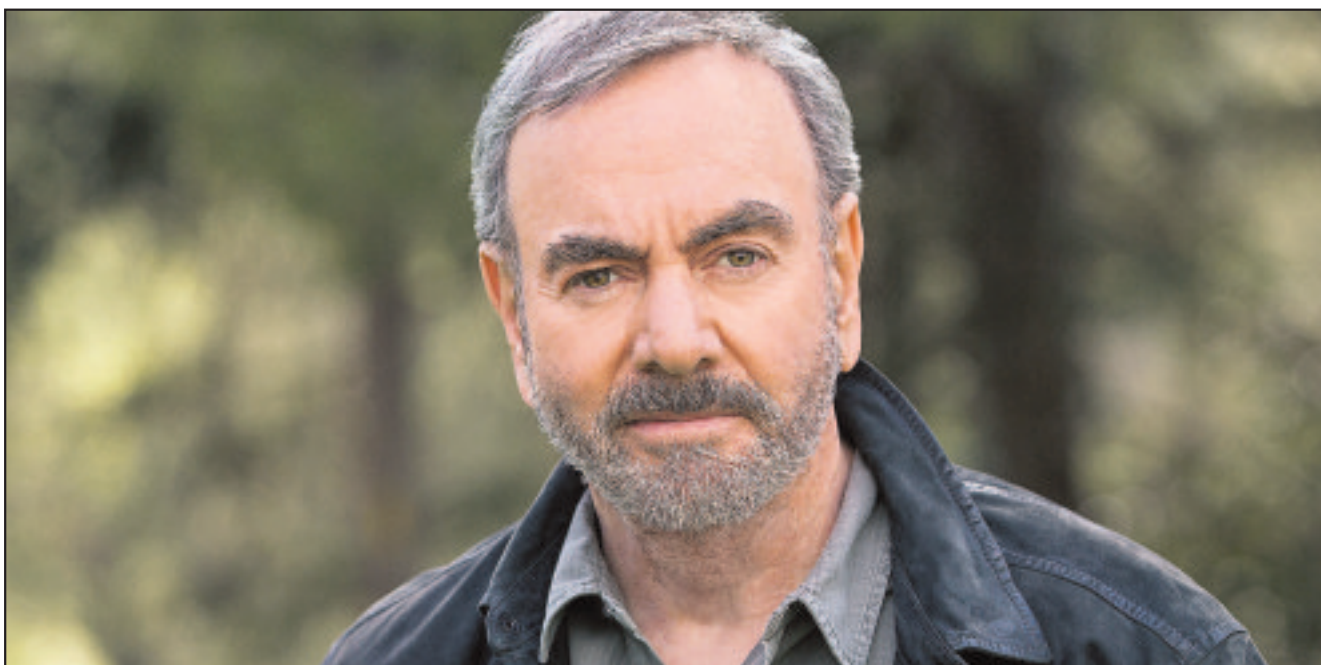
And here's another rub, the main audience of the Sixties stars is dying out also; those who were teenagers when the Beatles, Stones and Who first electrified London are pegging it all over the place. It happens, it's called life. Or rather, not.

Those of us who grew up with the Sixties and Seventies hits can barely admit that, like music hall and the circus, the sound of the era will soon have had its day; we've spent 50 years believing Bob Dylan's mantra that we will be Forever Young. But we won't, and neither will Dylan [now 74] nor any of his contemporaries. The dream, as John Lennon once sang, is over.

Or at least, very almost.

It's commendable that so many of them have kept going for so long, but their popularity is relative. McCartney recently sold out two nights at the O2, which is laudable, to sell 20,000 tickets a night at the age of 73. But Ed Sheeran [24] sold out three nights at Wembley Stadium, capacity 90,000. The new wave has taken over.

What keeps them going, these grand old men of rock? The money? They say not, although the truth is that they do like a lot of it, no matter



■ **MELODY MAKER:** Neil Diamond is touring with a new album, inset bottom, and plays London's O2 on July 26.

how much they have already. The buzz of performing to a crowd and the hit off of their affection that is said to be a better high than heroin?

Yes, partly that, but essentially – if they are any good – it's the drive of maybe, hopefully, writing that one last great song that beats all that they have done before.

McCartney often alludes to that wish in his interviews, the Stones also talk of aiming for "that zenith" in their work. And so does Neil Diamond, another master craftsman at the art of writing a truly memorable song.

We might think that Diamond – who appears at the O2 on July 26th – would have stopped chasing the songwriters' holy grail by now. With classics to his name that include Cracklin' Rosie, Song Sung Blue, You Don't Bring Me Flowers, America, I'm A Believer, Sweet Caroline, I Am I Said, Red Red Wine and Beautiful Noise, what's more to do?

"In all honesty, I don't think I've made it yet," he said at the start of his world tour earlier this year. "I'm still struggling to get to that perfect song, to make those perfect notes, to give that

perfect performance. So I'm still working on that part, I'm still working to that end. I haven't stopped dreaming."

As Beethoven would tell us if he hadn't rolled over, the art of songwriting is like creating furniture; there's a craftsmanship to it, a great skill that is honed with the years and while performing music may be more of a young man's game, writing it necessarily isn't.

But truly commanding that skill has obsessed musicians over the years and has sent a good few of them mad in pursuing the challenge.

John Lennon's early trick of knowing a great song was if you could remember how it went the next morning. When he started writing with Paul McCartney, before the days when even poor boys could afford machines to tape a demo, Lennon figured that if he could remember the melody the next day then the song had a shot at working

“Melodies are as easy as falling off a log for me, they come to me instantly”

on the radio, because if he couldn't remember a melody the next day then what chance did a record buyer have after hearing it once on the radio?

For Neil Diamond, who has written some of the more memorable melodies of the past 50 years, the tune is king for him too.

"For me it all starts with the melody," says the 74-year-old whose most recent album, the aptly-titled

Melody Road, debuted at the top of the UK and US charts at No 3.

"I think there's a certain part of the mind that deals with emotions and melody is part of it. After doing this for over half a century I just think it's very important to open up the mind to the emotional foundation of the song."

"Let it come. Do not try to shape it, stand back to listen to what it is, see if it still moves, if it's still interesting."

But, like many other brilliant tune-writers, getting the words right is another matter.

"Lyrics are impossible to write," he admits. "I hate writing them, I always have. Melodies are as easy as falling off a log for me, they come instantly and if they are written properly they provide an emotional foundation with the mood of a song."

"But then it's up to me to match that song with words, and express that feeling or tell a story – and it's hard. I don't like doing it. But I haven't found a lyricist that I can work with, so I'll slog through the lyrics as best I can and hope that they reflect the mood of the melodies and the whole thing adds up to something for the listener."

Great music, like all great art, gives its creator longevity, if not eternity. Although the joints and larynx may pack up around about the upper-70s, if the song lasts then so will you. But Diamond says that although he is still hooked on the process of songwriting, he didn't set out to achieve immortality through it.

"I never really chose songwriting, it just absorbed me and became more and more important in my life," he said. "I got into the habit when I was 16 or 17 and I haven't been able to stop. I sometimes wish somebody would shake me or stop me or make me put my guitar down, but it's like an addiction; it's an

other way of communicating and it's the right way for me.

"It's better than any shrink and it works, I'm able to put things down on paper that I feel, and I feel a little better after I do that."

"But I can't think of anything that I'd rather be doing. When I finish an album, within a matter of weeks I start writing again. I can't help myself, it's built into my genetic code, there are songs to be written."

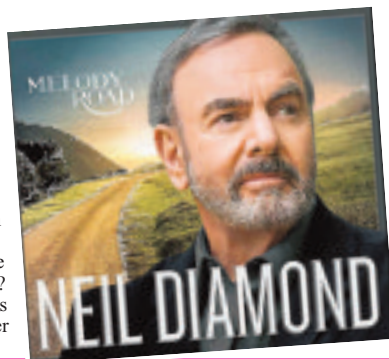
"I just have that thing that hurries me up and say 'Don't sit around and don't waste time, because it's fleeting and if you have any songs that are still inside yourself you better get to work'."

"That whole concept has become part of me and as I get older it's a more insistent whisper in my ear – Got to work. Go to work. Do not dawdle. Do not waste time. Write your songs and do them as well as you possibly can."

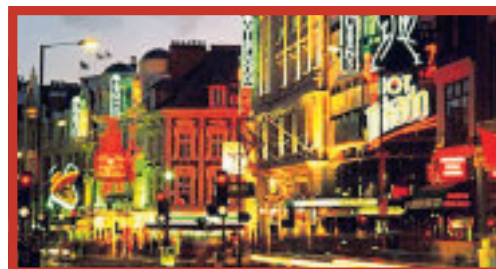
"That's one of the things that motivates me now, that time is limited. So I'm taking advantage of every moment I have to make music. I think that's my purpose here, to make music and to share it with people, and I'm on a mission to do that."

Anybody who saw Diamond bring the farm down at Glastonbury a few years back will forever be glad of the share, good times never seemed so good.

Check out the YouTube video of him closing his set there with Sweet Caroline – with 160,000 people yelling "da da dah" on the chorus – it is one of the happiest hairs-on-the-back-of-your-neck moments in the history of rock and roll and proof perfect that a great song will last forever. It is bound to take the roof off the O2 on Sunday. Go see it.



■ **Neil Diamond** at the O2 July 26th. Tickets www.theo2.co.uk



TALK OF THE TOWN

MUSIC ★ THEATRE ★ REVIEWS

*The entertainment scene
across London*

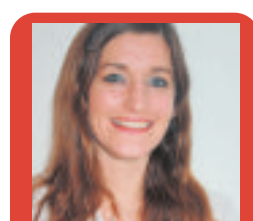
Calamity Jane gets better by degrees

THE hugely successful touring production of *Calamity Jane* starring Jodie Prenger will be the first in the world to be recorded in a 360-degree format.

The Curve theatre in Leicester will harness the very latest technology by releasing a 360° panoramic performance of the hit musical in a bid to make first class theatre accessible to all, calling it "a world first and true technological breakthrough".

This revolutionary new technology allows audience members to choose what they see and from where from the comfort of their own home.

Artistic director Nikolai Foster commented: "It is thrilling that our play about a group of pioneers from the 1800s has been filmed in 2015 using cameras and technology even ahead of their time today. I was amazed when I met Tom Mills of VR Web Design and learnt about his boundary-busting work. All of us at Curve and the *Calamity Jane* team are very excited to be the first to test this new technol-



By **NICKY SWEETLAND**
LWN Theatre Critic

ogy onstage."

Prenger was the winner of BBC1's *I'd Do Anything* in 2008, which gave her the opportunity to play Nancy in a West End revival of the British musical *Oliver!* at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

I caught up with the wonderfully down-to-earth performer who chatted to me about the show.

"Calamity is a glorious old dame of girl. I've never known a show that's had such an amazing response from the audience. It's been a surprise to me how people have hummed along and



■ **FAVOURITE:** Jodie Prenger in *Calamity Jane*, the show which is poised to stage a new world first.

swayed to the *Black Hills of Dakota*. We've had kids come along dressed as Calamity."

I confess that I took part in an amateur production of *Calamity* a few years ago and after a lot of giggling we talk about the complexities of playing such an iconic role.

"The dialogue is very difficult. We had the most amazing dialect coach on the show so we've all been ironed out. Tony, who plays Henry Miller, used to teach American history, so has all the background and although it sounds really arty farty, it does help to give you a sense of where you are and what you're doing."

The musical, made famous by the indomitable Doris Day, has one of the most recognisable soundtracks in theatre and film history, with classics like *Windy City*, *The Deadwood Stage* and of course the song that provided Day with one of her top ten hit UK singles, *Secret Love*.

Jodie confesses that if she had to choose, the *Secret Love* scene is her favourite part of the show.

"When we finish in Richmond I'm going to find it very difficult to let go of that song."

Letting go of it is inevitable, however, as Jodie's work schedule is already packed full of new projects once the tour is over.

"When I finish *Calamity* I'm doing *Annie* in Oxford, playing Miss Hannigan, and then I'm doing *Tell Me on a Sunday*."

She laughs. "I'm quite shocked Andrew Lloyd Webber is having me work for him again. Oh, that poor man and Don Black, who I've worked with briefly before. It will be nice to work with them both again."

"It's such beautiful music and the story, well with some of the people I've had in my life I've got a lot to draw on." She laughs again. "I love the piece and sadly I've never got to see it on stage."

If you can't wait for the filmed version you can still watch the show live when it comes to the Richmond Theatre from August 4th to 8th. See calamityjanetheshow.com

Very best of Bacharach

What's it all About?
Bacharach Reimagined
Menier Chocolate Factory *****

IF someone were to explain this show it would be very difficult to do it justice, writes *Nicky Sweetland*.

It is a 90-minute review with no dialogue, little choreography and the same performers on the relatively sparsely decorated stage for the duration of the performance.

What you get when you see *What's it all About? Bacharach Reimagined* at The Menier Chocolate Factory, however, is the most beautiful music played by the most wonderful performers in an uplifting and dynamic diamond of a show which will leave even the grumpiest theatre-goer with a smile on their face.

The show was conceived by Kyle Riabko, who met Burt

Bacharach in a Los Angeles recording studio after being asked to sing some demos for the legendary songwriter. After some brainstorming the show was gradually put together into what is a unique look at an incredible catalogue of music to form a non-stop musical arrangement. Riabko is a truly phenomenal performer who is not only the co-creator but also acts as musical director and front man. He bursts onto the stage and captivates throughout the entire performance.

This is not a tribute act and one of the most wonderful attributes this show carries is its different take on the classic melodies and lyrics which most of us know so well. From pure ballads to – at times – very heavy rock guitar the audience are taken through genre after genre, all ingeniously strung together

and simply but cleverly staged.

It's difficult to choose a musical highlight because the show literally jumps from start to finish and looking around the auditorium I wouldn't be surprised if there were a few sore necks the following day from vigorous head nodding. *Anyone Who Had a Heart*, *I Just Don't Know What to Do with Myself*, *I Say a Little Prayer* or even *Walk on By*, maybe – all were performed so skilfully I really couldn't choose.

Instruments adorn the set, which is otherwise dressed with carpet and soft furnishings in staging that is comfy and friendly like that of a sort of home recording studio.

The cast is made up of the highest quality singers and musicians who can all play at least one instrument and do so masterfully while often climbing or dancing around with superb energy and verve.

As if the press night of this show couldn't have gone any better, there was also a surprise in store for the waiting throng who, after the curtain call, were treated to a very special appearance from Bacharach himself. The 87-year-old composer took to the keys and joined the ensemble in a chorus of *Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head*, which left many in the audience more than a little teary eyed.

This is a truly special show and one I would urge anyone to go and see. Visit the website menierchocolatefactory.com



■ **BURT'S BEST:** Bacharach revived.

Picture: Nobby Clark



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TALK OF THE TOWN



The entertainment scene across London

london Listings

Importance of Being Earnest at the Vaudeville Theatre

To November 7
David Suchet stars as Lady Bracknell in Oscar Wilde's much loved masterpiece. Directed by Adrian Noble, Wilde's superb satire on Victorian manners is one of the funniest plays in the English language – the delightful repartee and hilarious piercing of hypocrisy and pomposity can still make you laugh out loud. Two bachelor friends, the adorable dandy Algernon Moncrieff and the utterly reliable John Worthing JP, lead double lives to court the attentions of the exquisitely desirable Gwendolyn Fairfax and Cecily Cardew. The gallants must then grapple with the riotous consequences of their deceptions, and with the formidable Lady Bracknell. www.importanceofearnest.com

Andre Rieu's 2015 Maastricht Concert, Vue, Fulham Broadway

To July 23rd
The king of waltz performs in his home town joined by his famous Johann Strauss Orchestra.

Buckingham Palace summer opening

August 1st to September 27th 2015
Visit Buckingham Palace, the official London residence of the Queen, this summer. Buckingham Palace is one of the world's few remaining working royal palaces – don't miss the chance to see it. Explore the lavishly furnished State Rooms, containing some of the greatest treasures from the Royal Collection. Highlights include paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Vermeer and Poussin, Canaletto and Claude. Sculpture by Canova and Chantrey. Exquisite examples of Sèvres porcelain. Some of the finest English and French furniture in the world.

Sinatra: The Man and His Music at the London Palladium

To October 10th
The iconic music of Frank Sinatra is brought to life at one of the capital's most iconic venues in Sinatra: The Man and His Music at the London Palladium. This multi-media concert, which has the support and endorsement of the singer's family, marks the centenary of Sinatra's birth and features all of his greatest hits including Fly Me To The Moon, New York, New York and My Way. Staged at the West End venue where the legendary entertainer made his 1950 British singing debut, Sinatra: The Man and His Music combines rare and original master recordings with cutting edge technology and never before seen performance footage to celebrate Sinatra's hugely successful music career. Featuring a 24-piece orchestra and a company of 20 dancers, the show takes audiences from

Sinatra's formative years to his later life with the help of interviews, family photos and films.

Prudential RideLondon

August 1 and 2
Developed by the Mayor of London and his agencies, Prudential RideLondon is a world-class festival of cycling. There is no other closed-road event like it that combines the fun and accessible element of a free family ride in central London with the excitement of watching the world's best professional cyclists race in the Prudential RideLondon-Surrey Classic and Prudential RideLondon Grand Prix.

Horrible Histories: Barmy Britain Part 3 at the Garrick Theatre

July 25 to September 5
We all want to meet people from history. The trouble is everyone is dead! Will King John be a martyr for the Magna Carta? Party with the Puritans and light up your life with the great fire of London! Clap along with crazy King Charles! Will you see eye to eye with Admiral Nelson? Does the Duke of Wellington get the boot? Vomit with the vile Victorians and make a great escape from the First World War! Starring Neal Foster and Anthony Spargo, it's history with the nasty bits left in! After last year's sell-out success the Garrick Theatre is thrilled to welcome back the most 'horrible' show in the West End. Tickets from £8.75

Hamlet at the Barbican Theatre

August 5 to October 31.
Directed by Lyndsey Turner and starring benedict Cumberbatch. Benedict Cumberbatch takes on the title role in Shakespeare's great tragedy. Directed by Lyndsey Turner (Posh, Chimerica) and produced by Sonia Friedman Productions, the Barbican presents an exclusive twelve-week run of this compelling new production in summer 2015. As a country arms itself for war, a family tears itself apart. Forced to avenge his father's death but paralysed by the task ahead, Hamlet rages against the impossibility of his predicament, threatening both his sanity and the security of the state. Produced by Sonia Friedman Productions. The Barbican has sold its current allocation of advance tickets. However, small numbers of tickets may be returned or released for advance sale online. Visit hamlet-barbican.com for more details. There are also 30 £10 tickets available as day-seats for sale each day in person. Up to two tickets per person, sold at the advance ticket desk from 10.30am; the Barbican Centre will open from 9am. Returned and late-release tickets may occasionally become available at the last minute on the day of the performance. Information about these will be available on the website in due course.

Exciting explosion of jazz and circus hits the heights

Scotch and Soda
Wonderground *****

I WAS so pleased to finally make it to a performance of *Scotch and Soda*.

This show, which is billed as a circus and jazz fusion, has been running at London's Wonderground since May and has received high praise, writes Nicky Sweetland.

On a sunny July evening the buzz surrounding the area on the Southbank was electric and with the Udderbelly festival in full swing, every bar and eatery was packed with people enjoying the warm weather.

The tone of the show was established as soon as we entered the big top, with lively loud music and the group on stage chatting and played cards, just as if we had entered a friendly local tavern. The show, which includes trapeze, pole, springboard and even cycling, had some of most unbelievable feats of strength and skill I have ever seen.

This is a real showcase for both the acrobats and the band in a performance which is perfectly moulded together and given a style and humour which is so often lacking from the regular circus. The gymnasts climbed ropes like they were stairs, and made some of the most difficult circus skills look like child's play. With clowning around to



■ STYLE AND HUMOUR: the stars of Scotch and Soda.

add as much humour and fun as possible they were astonishing, and supremely backed by the excellent Crusty Suitcase Band.

For some of the time I was so mesmerised by the spinning and balancing that I almost forgot the musicians. It was therefore really refreshing when they had their own solo moments and showed they were not to be upstaged by the tumblers. Particular mention must go to bass player Eden Ottignon, whose strumming and slapping carried such a sparkling undertone.

This was a hugely entertaining evening showcasing the immense skills of both musicians and acrobats alike. With a bit of naked hobby horse just for the fun of it, this is a show not to be missed!

■ Scotch and Soda runs until 2nd August at London's Wonderground

London Weekly News backs theatre awards

AFTER the hugely successful launch of the Wilma Awards in 2014, theatre blogger West End Wilma is to hold the star-studded event again this year and the *London Weekly News* is proud to announce that it is sponsoring the award for the Best Overall Performance.

The awards, which will take place this year on Friday 30th October at the London Hippodrome Casino, celebrate all things "stagey" in Wilma's very particular style.

West End Wilma is everyone's favourite nana in the theatre world. Running around the West End interviewing stars and reviewing as many shows as she can fit in to her busy OAP lifestyle, Wilma was awarded



the 2014 Ticketmaster Blog of the Year Award and has a great engagement with the theatre world through social media.

Other awards to be decided include Best West End show and Most Welcoming Venue. The ceremony will again be presided over by cabaret and Resonance FM favourite Tim McArthur.

West End Wilma and her team of reviewers will shortlist the nominees in each category from their combined opinions

on the past 12 months of the theatre. Those shortlisted will then be put to the public vote to decide the winners at westendwilma.com

The nominees for this year's Wilma Awards will be announced on August 7th.

Public voting will open online on September 4th and run until October 8th. The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony at the Hippodrome Casino, Leicester Square, at 1.30pm on Friday, October 30th.

This year, there will be a limited number of tickets available for the event at a price of £20 each. Visit www.hippodromecasino.com/whatson/west-end-wilma-theatre-awards

Brutally honest play investigates lust

THE King's Head are very proud to announce that *F*cking Men*, Joe DiPietro's serio-comic contemporary adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, set within the gay subculture of a big city, will be playing at the King's Head in August.

The play is a moving portrayal of hunger and desire as it follows the erotic encounters of 10 men in their interconnected search for sexual satisfaction. Each scene in the play is a frank, candid and sometimes brutally honest depiction of the lustful transaction between two men. It is a loose adaptation of the 19th century play, *La Ronde*, in which pairings

of characters are featured in scenes preceding and succeeding sexual encounters. It's a structure that lends itself to strong characterisations and oodles of dramatic irony.

The premiere run of *F*cking Men* began at the Finborough Theatre, from where it transferred to the King's Head to play for nine months (the longest ever off West End run of a play). It then transferred into the West End to the Arts Theatre, where DiPietro is enjoying a revival with a new production of his musical *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*.

La Ronde is no stranger to

controversy, originally having been banned until 30 years after being written for its depiction of sexuality. It is no stranger to adaptation and interpretation either, with modern versions including David Hare's *The Blue Room* and Michael John LaChiusa's musical *Hello Again*.

Artistic director of the King's Head Adam Spreadbury-Maher says: "*F*cking Men* is an incredible, important part of the history of LGBTQ theatre, especially at the King's Head. It represent what we stand for – taking smaller, less commercial productions and giving it a longer life. It will run from August 5 – 30.

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TALK OF THE TOWN ★ The entertainment scene across London

Tommy revives big band sound

VETERAN song and dance man Tommy Steele is to star in a brand new musical based on *The Glen Miller Story* and featuring the music of the great band leader.

As a lifelong lover of musicals, I have to admit that I felt very honoured to be allowed to speak with Tommy, who started his career as Britain's first rock 'n' roll star. Dubbed the UK's answer to Elvis Presley, he landed his first UK No.1 with *Singing the Blues* in 1957.

Steele chose the New Wimbledon Theatre to make the announcement, the venue in which his iconic show *Half a Sixpence* was first performed 53 years earlier and where the smash hit song *Flash Bang Wollo!* was written within the very walls of the beautiful piano bar in which we met. I had been invited to the announcement of the show, which will tour for an 11-week season later this summer.

Along with long time friend and virtuoso theatre producer Bill Kenwright, the show was conceived over a supper conversation following Tommy's visit to a school where he found himself telling the students about the band leader whose sound was so definitive of the era.

I chatted to Tommy after the announcement, a charming and extremely charismatic performer who will celebrate his 79th birthday later this year. His passion and enthusiasm for the project were obvious as he told me about it.

"It's like an adventure film. It's like looking for that treasure that's out there, only this fella was looking for a sound. You can't touch a sound, you can't see it in the corner, on the top of a mountain or across a stream, you have to hear it and that was his dilemma.

"He tried for years before he suddenly found it in the late 30s. He finds it at the end of act one. Everyone knows it's going to have a sad ending but as a musical it's beautiful and the dancing is fantastic. I can't wait to do it."

I've played a bit of Miller in my past life as a trumpet player and we talk about the wonderful



By NICKY SWEETLAND
LWN Theatre Critic

sound of the big band music. Tommy tells me when he first heard it.

"I first heard the Glen Miller sound in the 40s. My mother and father loved it although it wasn't until the war was over that suddenly the legend started to become. Everyone was talking about this icon of music who had died and no-one knew how."

The 1954 film about the American band leader starred James Stewart and boasted cameo appearances of many stars of the time, including Louis Armstrong and Gene Krupa, who were real-life peers of Miller.

Judging by the assembled throng of fans, both the draw of the iconic bandleader and of one

of the UK's biggest ever stage stars is likely to appeal to the more mature theatre goer, although with toe tapping tunes like *In the Mood* and *Moonlight Serenade* the producers are hoping a whole new generation will be able to enjoy the unique big band sound that defined a generation.

Tommy has enjoyed a legendary career including over 20 hit singles, 12 hit movies and countless award-winning stage musicals.

More recently Steele enjoyed two successful runs as *Scrooge* at the world famous London Palladium, in a role which has made him the theatre's all-time record breaking performer, having headlined more performances than any other star in the history of the venue.

As a fan, I couldn't leave without asking Tommy about his most famous role as Artie in *Half a Sixpence*. I asked which was his favourite part of the show.

"On stage it would have to be *Flash Bang Wollo!* live, but in the film it would be *If the Rain's got to Fall*, because it's beautiful in the open air with everybody doing the lovely soft shoes on the grass by the river Thames."

Tommy is obviously a big fan of musicals and watches as many as he can. We have a few minutes left after the interview and just chat about which shows we like and what we would like to see. I ask Tommy if there are any musicals he wishes he could have been in and at first he says no, but after a little consideration he concedes that he would love to have been in *Guys and Dolls*.

"I'd like to have played *Nicely, Nicely*. That's the best part. You get to sing *Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat*."

I could have stayed and talked to Tommy for hours and just listened to his stories about the business. He is a true legend and a very nice man.

The Glen Miller Story will no doubt be a nostalgic trip for many theatre goers and with the wonderful Steele at the helm, is likely to be a must-see show.

■ **The Glen Miller Story** Opens on August 28th at the New Wimbledon Theatre



■ **CHARMER:** Tommy Steele shows no signs of relinquishing his enthusiasm for stage performance.

Theatre-lovers off to summer camp

GLITTER and sparkle are hitting the West End this summer when the Supreme Fabulettes take up residency at the Leicester Square theatre, writes Nicky Sweetland.

Britain's most acclaimed all-male female close harmony vocal group promise 13 spectacular evenings of entertainment during July and August in their favourite home.

I caught up with Richard Rhodes, who plays razor-tongued Australian manager Miss Sheila Simmonds, just ahead of their opening night and he told me all about the razzle dazzle they will be bringing to Leicester Square.

"It's high camp, it's fun and it's a story of a typical girl band like the Supremes. It's the rise of the girls from the beginnings to nowadays. The story has lots of twists and turns, lots of campness, lots of glitter, feathers, high heels, make-up, and audience participation. Everyone gets up on their feet singing and dancing and it's just a really good night out."

Their live shows, a blend of classic number one hit songs, current chart-toppers and original songs by Boy George with sweet Glee-style harmonies, wondrous couture costumes and cutting-edge variety, have earned a clutch of five-star rave reviews and have twice been named No.1 Critics Choice by *Time Out*. They also featured in the cult TV series *Drag Queens of London*.

"We've got some Supremes numbers, we've got Taylor Swift, Madonna, Lady Ga Ga and I also do a very special duet with my on-stage daughter that's quintessentially Australian. We also do some musical numbers like the *Cell Block Tango*, which we've had re-written for the show. The audience seem to love it. We often do a meet and greet after the show and it's just wonderful to meet people and see what they think about it."

The group will then set out on a world tour, taking in Amsterdam, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, Tuscon, Arizona, Portland, South Beach, Copenhagen, Helsinki and Vienna.

The Supreme Fabulettes are the vision of the A-list creative team behind Kylie Minoque, directed and styled by Klylie's very own legendary creative director, William Baker.

■ **The Supreme Fabulettes'** remaining London summer dates are Friday 31 July and Saturday 1 August, Friday 7 and Saturday 8 August, Friday 14 and Saturday 15 August, Friday 21 and Saturday 22 August, Friday 28 and Saturday 29 August.



■ **MUSICAL ICON:** Glen Miller created a distinctive sound.

Osmonds embrace a Williams Christmas

TO celebrate the most wonderful time of the year, *Andy Williams Christmas Spectacular*, starring *The Osmonds*, is set to embark on a dazzling UK tour in December.

The show, which is being billed as a must-see holiday spectacular, will also feature the veteran British comic Jimmy Cricket alongside the Moon River Singers and Dancers.

Andy Williams Moon River Theatre owner and operator, Jimmy Osmond said: "I am

thrilled to bring *Andy's Christmas Spectacular* to our friends in the UK. I first appeared on Andy Williams' stage when I was only three years old. My brothers had been singing back-up on Andy's biggest hits and had been regulars on his hit television series for several years. It's such a joy to carry on Andy's legacy and continue his treasured holiday tradition."

Audiences will also be treated to nostalgic footage of the legendary Andy Williams from

Christmases past and be able to sing along to favourite Christmas classics including *Silent Night*, *Last Christmas* and *Merry Christmas Everybody* to *Sleighride*. The Osmonds will also perform their mega hits made famous during more than five decades of entertaining around the world. Osmond fans will hear *Love Me for a Reason*, *Crazy Horses*, *Down By The Lazy River* and more.

The tour starts on December 8th at the Malvern Theatre.

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TALK OF THE TOWN ★ The entertainment scene across London

WEST End leading man Michael Xavier is to star alongside Denise Van Outen in a strictly limited run of the Cy Coleman classic musical *Sweet Charity*. The concert version of the show made famous by Shirley MacLaine in the 1969 film adaptation will also star Girls Aloud's Kimberley Walsh and West End legend Kerry Ellis. With just six performances at Cadogan Hall, the production will also feature the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in what promises to be a feast of musical delight. Xavier, who's a double Olivier nominated actor and singer, most recently earned praise for his performance in the award-winning Steven Sondheim musical, *Assassins*, at the Menier Chocolate Factory. London Weekly News theatre critic **Nicky Sweetland** caught up with Michael, who is obviously relishing the prospect of working with some of the West End's most famous leading ladies. Here he provides a flavour of the story

Charity receives the star treatment

“The show is about Charity, who's a young girl working as a dance hall hostess in a nightclub but dreaming and wanting more from life.

“She's hoping that she can find a man who will look after her because she always seems to pick the wrong guys. She's always down on her luck until she bumps into a movie star, Vitorio, and ends up spending the night in his hotel room. She decides she's going to change her life and things do change when she bumps into Oscar, who is a claustrophobic, and they get stuck in a lift. He goes through this crazed state and by the end Charity realises he's a nice guy so they start dating.”

Michael is actually playing three different characters in the show, which had its last West End outing back in 2010 with the Menier Chocolate Factory production starring Tamsin Outhwaite in the title role. He explains a little about the different men he will be portraying.

“I play Charlie at the start, who is the bad lad who takes Charity's money and pushes her in the pond. I love getting to play different characters within a show because it's an opportunity to be as diverse as possible and show people



■ GALAXY OF STARS: Denise van Outen, Kimberley Walsh, Michael Xavier and, main picture, Kerry Ellis.

that I've got more than just the standard leading man character under my belt. Generally the roles I play are the love interest so it's quite nice to play a nerdy character for a change. I'm singing *I'm the Bravest Individual* in the lift with Charity and Vitorio has a gorgeous number called *Too Many Tomorrows*, but I also sing the title song, *Sweet Charity*, in act two. It's such a great score, and playing with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra is going to be fantastic.”

Although it's been billed as a concert version, Michael tells me there will be a lot more to it than just standing and singing along to the 50-strong orchestra.

handers, also starred *Gavin and Stacey*'s Steffan Rhodri in this comedic look into a bizarre friendship between two unlikely comrades.

The tale takes place in a seedy hotel room where we meet Ted, played by Merchant, a middle manager stuck in a dull life which offers nothing towards the dreamy existence with which he has become obsessed.

His best friend Morrie, a barber and part time soft porn film maker, has been roped into making a video to promote the life ideal which his friend hopes the world will embrace. As the



role of Grizabella from Nicole Scherzinger in the new Andrew Lloyd Webber production of *Cats* at the London Palladium.

Michael tells me: “I've known Kerry for years but we've never worked together and I've actually known Denise for quite a while too because I'm quite good friends with Lee Mead, who's her ex-husband. It's nice to be working with them and to get our teeth into some material together. I bumped into Kimberley at the Oliviers but this will be the first time we've worked together.”

I ask Michael to sell it to me and tell everyone why he thinks people should get their tickets before it's too late.

“Cadogan Hall is a beautiful little venue and feels really intimate and close. Other than hearing the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra playing the most wonderful score, people should come because it will be a fun night out. There's lots of comedy, romance, and tragedy within the structure of the story. Denise Van Outen's fantastic and we've got Kimberley and Kerry as well who are going to sing up a storm. It's going to be a really great night of entertainment.”

■ **Sweet Charity** has a strictly limited run at Cadogan Hall from the August 19th to 22nd. Visit cadoganhall.com

Merchant mixes sensitivity and delirium

The Mentalists Wyndham's Theatre ***

LAST Monday was the press night for the much anticipated West End debut of multi award-winning writer and co-creator of *The Office*, Stephen Merchant, in Richard Bean's *The Mentalists* at the Wyndham's Theatre, writes **Nicky Sweetland**.

It was enjoyed by the great and good of the UK comedy fraternity, including Jimmy Carr, Dara O'Briain and veteran actor Richard Wilson, along with other showbiz stars. The play, which is a two

story unfolds so does Ted's constitution as we come to realise he has more personality flaws than are at first apparent.

Merchant as Ted is gawky and awkward and at times in act one doesn't seem at all at home on the stage.

His performance in act two is much more plausible and he portrays the broken man with both sensitivity and delirium.

He is often outshone by the fabulous Rhodri, whose camp and yet macho Morrie delights the audience with classic anecdotes and one liners which keep the pace and interest intact during

an otherwise slightly slow act one.

The play is amusing but I never felt myself laughing out loud, although many of the press night audience did. It is an interesting and compassionate insight into a friendship between two men

who have been through the British care system and at times is very touching, but needs a little more pace and I would have preferred there to have been no interval.



■ **STUCK IN A RUT:** Middle manager Stephen Merchant.

WINE & DINE

The food and
drink page for
West London

Perfect summer pasta

THE sizzling weather might signal the start of holiday season for many of us, but while we slow down into relax mode, Italian cook Gennaro Contaldo is gearing up for another busy summer.

A great friend and mentor to Jamie Oliver, Contaldo is heavily involved in Oliver's Italian restaurant chain, which includes branches at Covent Garden, London Bridge, Angel, Canary Wharf, Greenwich, Victoria and Shepherd's Bush, and has just released *The Pasta Book* - his second cookery title this year - which is tied in with the younger chef's online Food Tube channel.

It's hard work, but work he clearly loves.

"A chef will always be a chef, it doesn't matter what kind of weather it is," reasons the 66-year-old, who splits his time between London and Norfolk, with his wife Liz and their 11-year-old twin daughters.

"It's nice to have a rest in the summer, but summer is also a nice time in the restaurant. The market stalls are full of incredible fresh vegetables, fish, herbs... People walk around with a big smile on their faces. It makes you happy."

Contaldo - who tries to bat away being called a chef, preferring to refer to himself as a cook ("You can call me a chef when I am 100 years old. It is a chance for me to live longer") - was born on the Amalfi Coast and has been whipping up meals since he was nine-years-old, having been bitten by the foodie bug when he started helping out in a restaurant that belonged to friend of his father.

Frequently swapping recipes and tips with Oliver and his other great pal Antonio Carluccio, who he travelled around Italy with to film 2011 cookery series *Two Greedy Italians*, Contaldo's daughters have also felt the benefit of his wisdom, and learned to cook at a "very, very, very young age".

"At the age of seven, they could make their own risotto," he reveals proudly.

"They can go into a restaurant and choose whatever they like. They do that. I'm a cook you see, it's a part of the culture. You never know where they might be later on in life, it's nice to know they will be able to make something to eat."

Even though their father will be within arm's reach of the kitchen this summer, the family will make plenty of trips to Norfolk, to relax in their 200-year-old cottage and enjoy the nearby seaside.

"I was born near the sea," Contaldo says. "The first thing I heard was the sea."

"The sea was my swimming pool and the beach



■ **GENNARO Contaldo - pasta is the perfect meal for summer**

was my playground. I do miss the sea. When I first came to England, the nearest place to see the sea was Brighton, and I couldn't wait to go and run my fingers through it.

"It would transport me to my home town, because the sea goes to every corner, every channel, everywhere. If I touch the sea, it is a touch to my home town. The sea is peace to me."

Although the sea is no longer in daily touching distance, Contaldo seeks solace in his plate, loading up on pasta dishes with plenty of fresh

fish.

And rather than being stodgy and heavy, he insists that pasta is the perfect meal for summer.

"Summer pasta is good, everything is fresh and in season," he says.

"Use your imagination and think, I've got this nice ingredient, it will go well with the pasta and make a lovely marriage'. Just don't experiment too much.

"You can give it a go and say, 'You know what? Gennaro said it was good and he was right!'"

Cook the bucatini in a large pan of boiling salted water until al dente.

Meanwhile, finely slice the garlic and chilli, then roughly chop the anchovies and tomatoes. Heat three tablespoons of oil (use the oil from the tin of tuna for added flavour, if you can) in a frying pan over a medium heat, then add the garlic, chilli, anchovies and capers. Fry for two minutes, then add the tomatoes and toss well.

Reserving some of the cooking water, drain the bucatini and add to the sauce. Toss well over the heat until lovely and glossy, adding a splash of the cooking water to loosen, if needed.

Flake in the tuna, then add some lemon juice and most of the rocket. Toss well to warm the tuna through and wilt the rocket, then season carefully with salt and more lemon juice. Serve with a drizzle of oil, and a scattering of the reserved rocket.

Try one of Gennaro's recipes from his new pasta book:

SIMPLE TUNA BUCATINI

(Serves 2)

200g bucatini pasta
Sea salt
1 large clove of garlic, peeled
1 fresh red chilli
2 anchovy fillets

4 ripe cherry tomatoes
Extra virgin olive oil
1 x 180g tin of quality tuna, in olive oil
1tbsp baby capers, rinsed
Juice from 1/2 a lemon
100g wild rocket, washed



MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Broad bean hummus

SERVES 4-6

THIS is a great alternative to the traditional hummus most people buy from the supermarket. You can make this with frozen broad beans, which will cut down the preparation time, and, to be perfectly honest with you, you won't know the difference.

500g broad beans (poddled weight)
5 cloves of garlic, peeled and sliced
150ml olive or rapeseed oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
For the relish

1 large spring onion, trimmed and finely chopped
1 small red chilli, finely chopped
50ml olive or rapeseed oil
A handful of coriander leaves, washed

Cook the broad beans in boiling salted water for 4-5 minutes, then drain in a colander over a bowl, putting the liquid to one side. Remove about 150g of peas and put to one side for the relish. Mix the rest of the broad beans with the sliced garlic and about 200ml of the hot cooking liquid, and discard the rest.

Transfer the broad beans, sliced garlic and cooking liquid into a food processor, season and blend on a high speed until smooth, trickling in the oil as it is blending. The mixture needs to be as smooth as possible. You can finish it off in a liquidiser if you have one and the food processor isn't doing the job. Transfer to a bowl and cover the surface with clingfilm until required.

To make the relish: remove the outer skins from the broad beans, put them in a bowl with the spring onion, chilli and oil, season and mix well. Chop about three quarters of the coriander and mix with the relish.

To serve, spoon the broad bean purée on to serving plates, spoon the relish over and scatter the remaining coriander on top.



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Anyone wishing to make a representation about this application must give notice in writing specifying the grounds of representation to the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, FAO: Licensing Section, Transport & Technical Services, PO Box 66532, London W8 9GJ or licensing@lbhf.gov.uk to be received by 15th August 2015.

A record of the application details may be inspected at www.lbhf.gov.uk/licensing or by appointment (020 8753 1081) at the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Environment Department Reception, 1st Floor, Town Hall Extension, King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 9JU.

Persons making representations will be invited to attend in person a public hearing before a Licensing Sub-Committee of the Council. It is an offence liable on conviction to a fine up to Level 5 on the standard scale under Section 158 of the Licensing Act to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with this application.

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Villa set sights on Austin bid

ASTON Villa became odds-on favourites to sign QPR hot-shot Charlie Austin as LWN Sport went to press on Monday.

The Midlands club had been priced at 16/1 to capture Austin only a matter of days ago but their odds have been slashed to 8/15.

Of course, in the frenetic world of modern football, where anything can change in an instant, Austin could well be posing for press photos in another club's shirt by the time you read this!

Austin, who scored 18 goals for relegated Rangers last season and earned a call-up to the England squad in June, has also been linked in media reports with a possible move to a number of Premier League clubs, including Newcastle United, Chelsea, Southampton, Crystal Palace, Bournemouth and West Ham United.

QPR have always insisted that they will not sell their top scorer and biggest asset for less than £15m, which appears to have ruled most of the above suitors out of the reckoning.

Villa became the most

logical destination for the former Swindon Town and Burnley centre-forward after they saw England midfielder Fabian Delph leave for Manchester City in an £8m deal and, more significantly, were then forced to sell their leading striker Christian Benteke to Liverpool, who triggered his release clause for an eye-watering £32.5m just days later.

If Benteke passes his Liverpool medical this week and the deal goes through without any unexpected last minute hitches, Villa manager Tim Sherwood will be in urgent need of a proven striker capable of scoring 20 Premier League goals a season. And Austin, 26, fits the bill perfectly.

Three of his 18 goals last season came against Aston Villa – the club where Sherwood took over as manager in mid-February after being widely tipped to succeed Harry Redknapp as R's new boss before Chris Ramsey was appointed at Loftus Road.



LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW

With Tony McDonald



■ CHARLIE Austin

Sherwood, Ramsey and QPR's director of Football Les Ferdinand are good friends from their time together as members of the Tottenham Hotspur coaching staff, so that's another possible factor pointing Austin in the direction of Villa Park.

Belgium international Benteke, 24, scored 13 goals last season to help Villa avoid relegation.

But if he is valued at £32.5m, even allowing for the age difference of two years between the

two strikers, then QPR should bank on receiving at least £15m for their top player in a wildly escalating transfer market.

■ QPR's Brazilian midfielder Sandro will be able to apply for a new work permit once clearance has been given by the football authorities.

R's were advised not to pick the 26-year-old at the end of last season because of an issue with his visa.

The club had their sponsorship licence suspended by the Home Office but it has now been reinstated. The licence lets clubs apply for visas for players from non-EU countries.

Sandro joined QPR from Tottenham last summer, for a reported fee of £10m.

He made 17 appearances for the west London club but missed the last three games of the season following his visa issues.

Whites win at Crawley

■ KIT Symons was pleased to see his Fulham side continue their pre-season preparations with a 3-1 win at Crawley Town on Saturday.

Tom Cairney's early strike was cancelled out by Izale McLeod's penalty but Jazz Richards and Liam Donnelly ensured the Whites left the League Two ground in Sussex with a victory.

"We had to work for the win, we squandered a few chances so we're a bit rusty still but it was a very good workout for the players," Symons said. "We had plenty of chances in each half and should have won both quite comfortably."

"Andy Lonergan had to make a good save at 2-1 but, overall, I couldn't ask any more from how pre-season is going. There's still a lot of work to do, obviously, but I'm pleased so far."

■ CHELSEA continue to clear out the bottleneck of development players stuck behind the first team squad by the loaning of Tomas Kalas to Middlesbrough for next season.

Kalas played the second half of the season at The Riverside under Mourinho's great friend and Boro manager Aitor Karanka.

■ BLUES' Ladies came crashing down to earth in the WSL match at Sunderland on Saturday, going down 4-0. It was the league leader's first defeat of the season.

However, Chelsea remain top of the WSL – two points clear of Arsenal after eight matches each.

■ SURREY have not given up hope of reaching their third consecutive NatWest T20 Blast finals day.

Last Friday's victory over Somerset, in front of another sell-out crowd at The Kia Oval, keeps Surrey in contention for a quarter-final place.

Jason Roy was outstanding, powering his way to 122 not out with 14 boundaries – six maximum hits – off 65 balls as Surrey won by 38 runs.

It sets it up very nicely for tonight's (Thursday, 6.15pm) vital showdown with local rivals Middlesex at Lord's, where Surrey need to win to keep their slender hopes of making it to finals day alive.

Rory Burns also deserves credit as the other not out batsman with a fine 46.

Rory formed a new opening partnership with Kumar Sangakkara, the combination putting on 84 runs before the Sri Lankan legend was stumped by Luke Ronchi off leg spinner Max Waller for 31.

Rory Burns also deserves credit as the other not out batsman with a fine 46.

Rory's century was only the second ever scored in Surrey's T20 history, beating the previous best he'd set. His 122 haul in Surrey's total of 208-1 was the highest by any Englishman in this season's T20 competition.

After tonight's short hop to Lord's, Surrey will be in T20 action again just 24 hours later when they host Sussex (6.30pm) in their final southern group fixture.

Surrey's latest T20 win followed their six-wicket success in the LV= Championship at home against Kent, which left them placed second behind Lancashire in the Division Two table. Sangakkara struck 110 runs in his side's 311 all out, in reply to Kent's 336.

After Kent were bowled out for just 99 in 41.1 in their second innings, Surrey had no difficulty amassing 126 for the loss of four wickets to win the game in 38.1 overs.

■ NEITHER Middlesex nor Somerset could force victory after a topsy-turvy 40-over run chase in the Championship at Merchant Taylor's, Northwood.

Hoping to achieve a positive result, home captain James Franklin opted to declare, setting Somerset 219 to win.

The away side looked well set at 99-2 but the loss of five wickets for 48 meant they could only muster 147-7.

The draw means Middlesex remain second in Division One, 14 points adrift of leaders Yorkshire.

Middlesex remain firmly rooted to the bottom of their T20 group after last Friday's four-wicket defeat by Essex at Chelmsford. The visitors lost their first wicket, Dawid Malan, with just one run on the board

■ CHELSEA – From page 28

"It doesn't upset me. I'm happy with the way that we are doing things, happy with the challenge of fighting against this power."

"I told the players that we are the same team and the others are not the same team. I cannot stop opponents to make an assault to the banks and spend millions and millions. I cannot stop that. I cannot stop the others from having a feeling that they are playing against the champions."

"The others are spending. The others are buying a lot to try to be better than us and the fact that we are the same – we are changing a goalkeeper for another one, a striker for another one."

He is referring to Asmir Begovic being brought in to succeed Petr Cech, and Didier Drogba being replaced by Radamel Falcao, albeit on loan.

Chelsea never intended to be major players in the transfer market this summer. They did their major business last year and reaped the dividends with a Premier League title to go with their Capital One Cup victory.

Challenge

But Mourinho has sent out a challenge to his stars that last season was one thing, next season must be better.

"It's a big challenge," he explained.

"To be better with the same people, the players have to be better individually than they were last year. So when they think: 'Oh, last season I did great', this season it is not enough," he added.

"John Terry had a great season. This season it is not enough. He must be better. Cesc Fàbregas, I don't know how many assists last year. Fantastic. It's not



Surrey still have T20 hope



■ KUMAR Sangakkara hit 110 for Surrey. Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

and it was left to Nick Gubbins (46) to ease Middlesex to an inadequate 150-5 from their 20 overs.

Although, on paper, Middlesex have nothing left to play for in the T20 this summer, they will be desperately keen to end Surrey's hopes of reaching the quarter-finals when these two old rivals meet at Lord's tonight. Middlesex will then complete their T20 fixtures at Somerset tomorrow (Friday, 6.30pm).

■ THIS Sunday sees both of our county sides commence their Royal London-sponsored One Day Cup campaign.

Middlesex entertain Warwickshire at Lord's (10.30am) in the 50-over competition, followed by a visit to Blackpool to face Lancashire next Wednesday (10.30am).

Surrey start with a trip to Leicester (Sunday, 10.30am) before hosting Northamptonshire at The Kia Oval on Monday (2.00pm).

enough. Because the others are going to improve with the players they are bringing in and we have to improve by ourselves with our work."

Mourinho's comments are not a reaction to the current mega-spend by the two Manchester clubs. He stated at the end of last season that his players have to be better.

He cited Oscar in those comments, saying that he has to show the same incremental improvement in performances that Eden Hazard did.

For his part, Oscar has spoken out about the speculation that he could exit Stamford Bridge for Juventus in Italy.

He is reported to have said: "No. I know there has been a lot of talk about Juventus, but I am very, very happy at Chelsea."

"Last year I signed a new contract and I want to stay a long time at

Chelsea. I have never been unsettled by what was being said."

"I missed the end of last season but now I am over the injury and back to full fitness."

"I have been able to make the start of pre-season and prepare for the season. I haven't been able to have a pre-season for the past five years, because I have had to play so many games in the summer, so this pre-season for me is very important."

"Most players don't like to get injured but it did force me to have a rest. This is important. It meant I had to miss the Copa America but sometimes this happens in football and now I am fit and feeling fresh."

Chelsea's first pre-season match on their USA tour takes place tonight (Thursday), when they travel to New York to take on MLS side New York Red Bulls.

Paul Logan

■ FULHAM – From page 28

What no-one at Fulham is saying at the moment is whether a sell-on clause has been included in the youngster's transfer to Man City – reported to be an initial fee of £2m plus add-ons.

When Liverpool lured the then 15-year-old Raheem Sterling away from QPR for around £400,000 in 2010, Rangers shrewdly insisted upon inserting a clause that will see them receive 20 per cent – somewhere between £9-10m – of the £49m fee City agreed to pay Liverpool for the England winger last week.

On loan for season

Another question Fulham fans wanted an answer to is: what chance Roberts being allowed to rejoin Whites on loan for this season?

By signing him, City are meeting their need to bolster their quota of English players and buying long-term potential, not proven experience. Roberts is likely to be assigned to almost permanent bench duty in his first season with the 2014 Premier League champions.

But if Symons promised City that Roberts would get plenty of game-time in the Championship this season, then a regular stint in the second tier could prove beneficial to the player's gradual development.

On the other hand, City boss Manuel Pellegrini may prefer Roberts to stay close and believe his progression towards the first team will be best served by being around and training with world class stars such as Sergio Agüero and David Silva on a daily basis.

SPORT

Thursday, July 23rd, 2015

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■ KURT Zouma could be on his way to Crystal Palace Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

Zouma figures in Stones bid

KURT Zouma is earmarked for a season-long loan to Crystal Palace but only if Premier League champions Chelsea can land Everton centre-back John Stones.

The French centre-back, 20, who signed from Saint-Etienne in January 2014 for £12.5m, made 17 appearances for Chelsea last term, scoring twice.

However, many of his most impressive displays were as a central midfield destroyer, most notably when he easily shackled Spurs' hit-man Harry Kane in the Capital One Cup final at Wembley, where Blues ran out comfortable 2-0 winners.

It was intended that last season would be his period of acclimatisation but Gary Cahill's dip in form forced Jose Mourinho to pitch the youngster into the first team arena earlier than anticipated.

With Cahill almost back to his best, Mourinho is keen to revert to his original plan – by sending Zouma out on loan to a mid-ranking Premier League side where he can toughen up and play regularly.

Crystal Palace are eagerly awaiting the outcome of

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

the increasingly fraught transfer battle for Stones, who, at 21 and with four senior England caps under his belt, is seen as a long-term replacement for John Terry. He made 23 League appearances last season and has four years to go on his Goodison Park deal. LWN Sport exclusively revealed Chelsea's interest in the West Yorkshireman weeks ago but now Chelsea has gone public and Everton are fuming.

Bid refused

The west Londoners lodged a £20m bid for Stones two weeks ago. That was refused and Everton made it clear they did not welcome a further offer.

But Chelsea, currently based in Montreal ahead of pre-season matches in the USA, have decided that doing the deal discreetly, their preferred option, was not going to reap any benefit and decided to speak publicly about Stones.

It will cost Chelsea £30m to wrest Stones away from Goodison Park. The theory behind going public is that it will unsettle the former Barnsley star, who cost the Toffeemen £3m in January 2013.

Mourinho said: "We made a bid because we like the player.

"When the transfer window is open, every club and player is open to bids.

"Bids come for our players and we make bids for other players. The process can be so simple.

"I would advise Roberto Martinez to do the same thing I do. If I don't want to accept any offer, I say: 'I don't accept any offer'. He can make it very, very easy for himself.

"At the moment Everton say: 'We don't accept this bid'. They don't say: 'We don't accept any bid.'

"While they say: 'We don't accept this bid', until the transfer window closes, we can improve it. £1 more, £10 more, we can improve the bid. It is an open market until September 1.

"If one day Roberto, or the chairman, come and say: 'He's not for sale, we don't accept any bid', it's game

This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE



over. So during this process, it's clear. "We don't deny we made a bid for Stones. It means we are trying to buy."

An angry Martinez countered: "Another football club is making such a statement so openly and I don't think that is the way we would do it at Everton. We wouldn't speak about a player that is at another club.

"But there is no issue from our point of view. John Stones is an Everton player, full stop.

"We are not a selling club in that respect. There is nothing to speak to John about. I always speak with the players but there is nothing to comment about."

Mourinho knows that time is ticking on the extraordinary career of his skipper John Terry and Stones provides the club with a 10-year option, while Terry remains in SW6 on a year-by-year basis.

Mourinho explained his rationale and transfer strategy and it's as pragmatic as ever.

"We have three central defenders plus Branislav Ivanovic, so that is four. We have two who are more than 30-years-old. We would like to have two under the age of 25, which would give us the next 10 years. But as you can imagine, it's not something urgent, it is not something we are desperate for.

"I think five or 10 years ago, every Chelsea supporter would say: 'I can't see Chelsea winning a title without Frank Lampard'. But Chelsea won the title without one of its three best players of the last 10 years.

"No-one is irreplaceable. Difficult to replace, yes. To replace one by one is very difficult. To replace by good time, a good structure, a good dynamic, good options, it's possible.

"One day when John stops, and I don't think it will be next season, we have created already a situation for him to be replaced. I always think in this direction."

He went on: "If I go for somebody, it's because I lose somebody. Or it's because somebody wants to leave and because somebody brings the perfect offer for Chelsea to accept.

Market inflated

"I think the market is inflated. I only have to look at what is happening in my own country. Portugal is a country in trouble generally, socially, politically, economically. It's a country where people are suffering a lot, there have been a lot of cuts, old people have trouble with their pensions, tax is higher, salaries, jobs, everything.

"This season Porto paid €20m for Giannelli Imbula and they give Iker Casillas an amazing salary. Sporting Lisbon are paying millions for coaches and players. Football breaks every situation.

"This season we are saying: 'Oh, look at this amount (£49m) for Raheem Sterling' but it will be worse next season. Next season someone will pay £60m. Football is like this. One season is financial fair play, the next is a way to dribble through the financial fair play.



Focus on Craven Cottage

By TONY McDONALD

City gamble on Fulham kid

FULHAM simply could not prevent their highly-rated teenager Patrick Roberts from joining Manchester City for an undisclosed fee – a deal that could reportedly eventually rise to £11m.

The 18-year-old right-winger, from Kingston-upon-Thames, has long been on the radar of England's top clubs but finally made the move to the Etihad Stadium on Sunday after a summer of intense speculation.

Signed from AFC Wimbledon at the age of 13, the England U19 international made his debut for the Cottagers as a 55th-minute substitute at Manchester City in March of last year but made only 22 first team appearances for Whites.

Despite making an impact off the bench at Ipswich in Fulham's first game back in the Championship, Roberts found opportunities

limited under both former manager Felix Magath and Kit Symons.

In total, he played only 356 minutes, spanning 17 games, throughout last season and completed a full match just once. He leaves having never scored a first team goal for Fulham.

Caught the eye

It was his performances for Fulham as a youth and for England at international level that caught the eye of Man City. Roberts has turned out for England's U19s on five occasions, netting four times.

Collectively, he has made 24 appearances for the Young Lions at U16, U17, U18 and U19 levels.

Roberts has featured on many FA highlight reel videos, with his tricky footwork and clinical finishing making him a stand-out performer for the national team. Fulham's U18s were one of the

most prolific teams among the Premier League youth ranks in recent years – and Roberts played a key role in their success. The starlet featured in Whites' U18 Premier League title successes of 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Not only does he feature down the flanks, he likes to drift inside and is talented enough to play behind the striker in a playmaking role as well.

Roberts had only a year left on his contract at Craven Cottage but handed in a transfer request on Saturday. By instigating his own departure, there was no way Fulham had a hope of keeping him in west London with the Premier League's biggest predators circling like vultures.

On the eve of Roberts' move, Symons explained the difficulty all vulnerable clubs such as Fulham have in trying to retain their best prospects when much bigger clubs

covet them: "It's very difficult," said Symons. "We want to keep all our best players and build for the future but there comes a point where that becomes very difficult and you have to do what's right for the football club.

Committed

"It's a shame to lose one of our bright young talents but I need to have people that are committed and want to play for the football club.

"I sat down with Pat and his parents and told them how much we value him and want him at the club. But they'd made their minds up and it then becomes quite difficult. We did all we could to keep him but good luck to him if this is what's going to happen. We'll move on, this is a big club with a lot of good players here."

■ CONTINUED PAGE 27

■ CONTINUED PAGE 27